ITALY IN THE POETRY AND POLITICS OF THE COCKNEY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The thesis addresses the significance of responses to Italy and Italian literature in the writings of Leigh Hunt and his associates, exploring the ways in which the critical reaction to their 'Anglo-Italianism' shaped the image of the 'Cockney School'. This reaction has been recognised as a re-enactment of earlier attacks upon the so-called 'Della Cruscans', but this thesis reveals the full complexity of the relationships within and between these critical and poetic schools. Often presented as a movement originating in the work of a number of English writers gathered at Florence in 1785, the 'Cruscan School' comprised two groups, connected by the presence of Robert Merry ('Della Crusca') and brought together in the satires of William Gifford. The first chapter reviews the history of the 'Della Cruscans', addressing some of the misconceptions which still surround them. Consideration is then given to Merry's response to the French Revolution, presenting this as the motivation behind Gifford's attack in a section which also identifies the source of animosity between Gifford and Hunt. Having introduced the idea of a link of personal acquaintance between Hunt and the 'Della Cruscans', the second chapter traces the origin of his love of Italy to the home of the artist Benjamin West. The third concerns Hunt's treatment of Dante's 'Paulo and Francesca' in the Story of Rimini (1816). A principal target of the 'Cockney School' attacks, the poem also influenced the Italianate projects of a number of Hunt's young associates, notably Keats, John Hamilton Reynolds and Bryan Waller Procter ('Barry Cornwall'). These projects are discussed in the fourth chapter, which brings the thesis to the end of 1821, at which point William Maginn (writing in Blackwood's Magazine) recast the 'Cockneys' as the modern 'Della Cruscans'. This critique is shown to have been an early reaction to the Liberal (1822-4) in a chapter which concludes with a section upon Hunt's residence in Florence.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ALH	The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt: with Reminiscences of Friends and Contemporaries. 3 vols. London, 1850.
BLJ	Byron's Letters and Journals. The complete and unexpurgated text of all the letters available in manuscript and the full printed version of all others. ed. Leslie A. Marchand. 13 vols. London, 1973-94.
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography. eds Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee. 63 vols. London, 1885-1900.
DNB (2004)	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. eds H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. 60 vols. Oxford, 2004.
Howe	The Complete Works of William Hazlitt. ed. P. P. Howe. 21 vols. London and Toronto, 1930-4.
LJHR	Jones, Leonidas, M. The Life of John Hamilton Reynolds. Hanover and London, 1984.
LJK	The Letters of John Keats 1814-1821. ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1958.
Reiman	The Romantics Reviewed. Contemporary Reviews of British Romantic Writers, Part C Shelley, Keats, and London Radical Writers [in two volumes]. ed. Donald H. Reiman. 9 vols. New York and London, 1972.

INTRODUCTION

Commenting on the Edinburgh Review in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for August 1823, 'Timothy Tickler' drew attention to a passage in William Hazlitt's article 'On Periodical Criticism' concerning the fate of John Keats. There it was claimed that Keats was attacked simply because he had been noticed in the Examiner and that he would have 'fared very differently' had he rejected the praise of Leigh Hunt and sought, instead, to 'conciliate the smile' of William Gifford, 'editor of the Quarterly Review, and author of the Baviad and Mæviad'. This, 'Tickler' asserted, was little more than 'direct mis-statement and base misrepresentation', since 'it was not, as [was] so plainly insinuated', Gifford who had initiated the attack. Keats's allegiance to 'King Leigh' and the 'Cockney school' was well publicised, 'Tickler' argued, and he had been 'utterly demolished, and dished by Blackwood—long before...Gifford's scribes mentioned his name'. Moreover, 'Tickler' added, the Quarterly Review had not invented the term 'Cockney School', but merely adopted it 'after it had been introduced by Blackwood into universal use, and had become as much an integral part of the language of English criticism, as any other phrase in the dictionary'.[1]

'Tickler' alluded, of course, to Blackwood's essays 'On the Cockney School of Poetry', a series begun in October 1817 and recently resumed in response to the Liberal. There 'Z.' had indeed claimed the 'honour of christening' the school, the rise of which Hunt had hailed in his 'Young Poets' notice of 1816, 'dishing', not only Keats, but all who had identified themselves with the 'bad political principles' of the editor of the Examiner or 'put forth sonnets' in praise of his Story of Rimini (1816).[2] 'Tickler's' assertion that Blackwood's had invented the phrases by which Keats and his fellow 'Cockneys' were subsequently characterised in the Quarterly is itself something

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[1] 'Letters of Timothy Tickler, Esq. To Eminent Literary Characters. No. VIII', Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (Aug. 1823), 225-6.

[2] Quoting Ibid. and 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. I', Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (Oct. 1817), 36.

of a 'misrepresentation', however. Many of these phrases were to be found in Gifford's characterisation of the earlier 'Cruscan (or, 'Della Cruscan') School', the principal target of his Baviad (1791) and Mæviad (1795). Writing in Blackwood's in 1821, William Maginn had in fact acknowledged the debt to Gifford, identifying the 'Cockneys' as the 'modern *Della Cruscans*'.[3] The aim of this thesis is to set responses to the so-called 'Cockneys' against this 'Della Cruscan' background, exploring the full complexity of the relationship between the two 'schools'.

Maginn's review of Shelley's Adonais (1821) is among those cited in Steven Jones's Satire and Romanticism (2000). In a chapter entitled 'Della Crusca *Redivivus*: The Revenge of the Satiric Victims', Jones draws upon the idea of a poetical kinship between the 'schools', highlighting ways in which attacks upon the 'Cockneys' re-enacted Gifford's 'punishment' of the 'Della Cruscans', consciously invoking 'a precise range of generic and literary-historical comparisons'. In reviewing that 'punishment', Jones points to evidence of Gifford's political motivation.[4] Though by no means unrecognised, this aspect of the satires has often been passed over by critics preferring to accept Gifford's own explanation that the Baviad was directed at nothing other than the 'wretched taste' of its targets.[5]

Until recently, the predominant image of the 'Della Cruscans' held up for posterity has remained, at best, that of 'a band of poets...who produced affected, sentimental, and highly ornamented verse', and, at worst, that of a 'ridiculous...school' which 'united pretentiousness and imbecility after a fashion not easy to parallel elsewhere'.[6] In his Introduction to the recent Oxford Companion to the Romantic

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[3] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', Blackwoods's Edinburgh Magazine (Dec. 1821, Part II), 696-700.

[4] Satire and Romanticism (New York, 2000), 111-138.

[5] See appendix (Dec. 1799), The Baviad and Mæviad, 6th edn. (London, 1800), xv.

[6] Margaret Drabble (ed.), The Oxford Companion to English Literature, (Oxford and New York, 1995), 268, A. R. Waller and A. W. Ward (eds), The Cambridge History of English Literature, 15 vols. (Cambridge, 1907-27), XI, 40, 176-7.

Age, Iain McCalman cautions against this tendency to confirm 'the brilliant ideological work' of Gifford and other 'professional anti-Jacobins', identified in Jon Mee's entry on 'Della Cruscanism' as 'an early sign of the conservative reaction which was to sweep through literary culture in response to the French Revolution'. The 'Romantic Age' must, McCalman asserts, 'be capacious enough...to encompass the sentimental and ardently libertarian Della Cruscan...school of the 1780s'.[7] In doing so, he draws upon Jerome McGann's discussion of the Romantic canon in a chapter on 'Poetry' which appears later in the Companion. Likening the canon to the Pleiades in Taurus, McGann puts forward the idea of a seventh, 'lost', Pleiad' (a metaphor which, in turn, brings to mind Jeffrey Cox's image of the partially faded 'group portrait of romanticism' in his 1998 study of the 'Cockney School').[8] Among the names which make up this Pleiad are those of Robert Merry, Hannah Cowley and Mary Robinson. Writing as 'Della Crusca', 'Anna Matilda' and 'Laura', respectively, these were the so-called 'luminaries' of the World (1787-1794), the 'grand depository' of 'Della Cruscan' verse and the focus of much of Gifford's attack.[9]

As Corinna Russell notes in her entry on Robert Merry in the new Dictionary of National Biography (2004), McGann has been at the forefront of recent attempts to 'rehabilitate' the 'Della Cruscans'.[10] Russell refers to McGann's The Poetics of Sensibility (1996) in which he describes 'the complete excision of Della Cruscan poetry from the history of English writing' as a 'cultural disaster'.[11] An understanding of this poetry is important, McGann argues, in that it 'provides an invaluable corpus

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[7] An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age, British Culture, 1776-1832 (Oxford, 2001), 2 and 481-2.

[8] See Ibid., 270, and Jeffrey N. Cox, Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School, Keats, Shelley, Hunt and their Circle (Cambridge, 1998), 224.

[9] Quoting Gifford's Introduction, Baviad and Mæviad, x, xii.

[10] H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 2004), XXXVIII, 924.

[11] The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style (Oxford, 1996), 96.

for studying the conventions of sensibility;...gives greater access to...the major poets who worked in the first phase of the tradition, that is, in the years 1760-1840', and 'opens new avenues for (re)reading the poetry that succeeded it'.[12] In the course of a chapter on 'The Literal World of the English Della Cruscans', McGann identifies the poetic correspondence of 'Della Crusca' and 'Anna Matilda' (1788-9) as the 'defining event' of Della Cruscan writing. The 'rapid cultural dominance' which this 'movement' achieved during the 1790s may, he suggests, be attributed to the fact that it 'explicitly encouraged further writing,...appeal[ing] as much to women's as to men's imaginations'. Generating these 'generations', McGann adds, was the 'theatricality of the verse' and 'its conscious pursuit of illusion and surface'.[13]

McGann's discussion provides the starting point for Judith Pascoe's discussion of the 'Della Cruscans' in her 1997 work, Romantic Theatricality, which examines the role of 'Della Cruscan' poetry in launching the careers of women poets.[14] Jacqueline Labbe also engages with McGann's work on sensibility in The Romantic Paradox (2000), in which she explores the World's numerous apostrophes to 'female objects', before concentrating on the performative 'epistolary romance' of 'Della Crusca' and 'Anna Matilda', in particular.[15]

This 'romance', and the anthologies in which it was reproduced (The Poetry of the World, published in 1788 and The British Album of 1790), has been the focus of much critical attention. However, in the opinion of W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley - who anticipated McGann in presenting the World correspondence as 'Della Cruscanism fully-blown' in his 1967 study of The English Della Cruscans and their Time - the 'foundations' of what is now known as 'the Della Cruscan school' were

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[12] The Poetics of Sensibility, 96.

[13] Ibid., 81, 90, 96.

[14] See: Romantic Theatricality. Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship (Ithaca and London, 1997), 3-8 and 68-94.

[15] See: The Romantic Paradox. Love, Violence and the Uses of Romance, 1760-1830 (London, 2000), 9, 39-66.

'stumblingly measured out' in an earlier exchange between Robert Merry and the Scottish painter, Allan Ramsay.[16] The exchange, which took place in Florence in 1784, appeared in the privately-printed Arno Miscellany, a volume which may in turn have owed its existence to the success of poems produced by Merry during the first three years of his residence in Italy. The earlier ventures would certainly contribute materially to his next significant collaboration, the Florence Miscellany, compiled in 1785.

Though a need to differentiate between the authors of the Miscellany and the contributors to the World was highlighted (by Roderick Marshall) as early 1934, the volume has long been regarded as a 'Della Cruscan' project.[17] In focusing on the work of Merry and his associates, this thesis aims to re-emphasise that distinction. The blurring of the Florence- and London-based groups has much to do with Gifford's mocking representation of the former in his Introduction to the Baviad, an 'act of cultural definition' as 'powerful' as that subsequently carried out in Blackwood's 'Cockney School' essays.[18]

As Cox notes in his discussion of 'Z.'s' reaction to the 'Hunt circle', these essays were designed to counteract 'a preexisting positive presentation of the group' (primarily, Hunt's 'Young Poets' notice).[19] Whilst Gifford's criticism of the 'Della Cruscans' - or, specifically, of 'Della Crusca' himself - forms the background for the consideration of the attacks on Hunt and his associates throughout the present thesis, it is to the earlier Florence-based group that it looks for a parallel to those 'positive presentation[s]' of the so-called 'Cockney School'. Recent reassessments of the 'Della

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[16] The English Della Cruscans and their Time, 1783-1828 (The Hague, 1967), 29, 169.

[17] In Italy in English Literature, 1755-1815: Origins of the Romantic Interest in Italy (New York, 1934), 174-9.

[18] See Baviad and Mæviad, vii-ix. Quoting Cox: Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School, 21.

[19] Ibid., 21-3.

Cruscans' have explored the stylistic similarities between the two 'schools'. This thesis focuses primarily on their 'social genealogy', by which is meant the series of friendships and corresponding sympathies which linked the schools both to each other and to those great poets from whom they drew inspiration.[20]

The thesis begins with a brief, introductory overview of what Gifford termed 'the rise and progress' of the 'Della Cruscan' school, setting out the arguments for a distinction both between the Florence Miscellany and the poems published in the World, and the authors of the Miscellany and the targets of Gifford's attack.[21] Whilst taking into account existing work on the 'Della Cruscans', it returns to both the Arno and Florence Miscellanies in an attempt to address some of the misconceptions which still surround them. Critics have disagreed on the degree of political intent behind the Florence Miscellany in particular. In considering Merry's engagement with the French Revolution, the thesis points to aspects of both volumes which anticipate his enthusiastic response. Having presented Merry's political writing - specifically, the Laurel of Liberty, published in 1790 - as the motivation behind Gifford's satires, the thesis proceeds to look at these and other contemporary responses to the 'Della Cruscans' in detail, highlighting ways in which they anticipated subsequent criticism of the 'Cockney School' and identifies, in the attack upon Mary Robinson, the source of animosity between Gifford and members of the 'Hunt circle'.

The quarrel between Gifford and Hunt would appear to have influenced Gifford's response to the poet's Story of Rimini (in some ways, the 'Cockney School' equivalent of the Laurel of Liberty), in which Hunt elaborated upon the story of Dante's 'Paulo and Francesca. The poem was indicative of Hunt's desire to be 'Italian', and, as such, became a principal target of the Blackwood's essays which commenced the following year. Before considering the Story of Rimini itself, therefore, the thesis looks to the origin of Hunt's love of Italy and Italian literature, tracing it to the Newman Street home of his great uncle, the American artist Benjamin West,

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[20] Quoting Hunt's 'Social Genealogy', Indicator (17 Nov. 1819).

[21] Baviad and Mæviad, 59.

whose influence on the young Hunt is explored in detail in Nicholas Roe's recent biography.[22] In doing so, the thesis seeks to place Hunt's 'Italianophile' tendencies in their wider cultural context. Taking up an idea suggested by Edward Bostetter's 1956 article on The Original Della Cruscans and the Florence Miscellany and combining it with the subject of an essay written by Hunt in 1819, the chapter also establishes a chain of handshakes between Hunt and the 'Della Cruscans', identifying West as a significant 'link'.[23]

The enduring impression of West's house and the chain of handshakes are carried through into the third chapter which begins with an overview of earlier representations of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode in both art and literature before tracing the history of Hunt's own version. In his 1991 work Keats, Shelley & Romantic Spenserianism, Greg Kucich highlighted the poem's debt to Spenser. Whilst acknowledging the presence of Spenser throughout Hunt's study of Italian, the second section of the chapter focuses upon other works which contributed to Hunt's reworking of the story, in particular, William Gilpin's Remarks on Forest Scenery (1791). Attention is also drawn to the environment in which the Story of Rimini was written, an environment which not only looked back to the house on Newman Street but also had parallels within the poem itself. Consideration is then given to the poem's reception. Adding to recent work on the Blackwood's 'Cockney School' attacks, the thesis focuses on the response of the Quarterly Review, placing this firmly in the context of the ongoing 'quarrel' between Hunt and its editor, William Gifford.

As Cox has pointed out, the Story of Rimini 'stands behind' the Italianate projects of a number of Hunt's young associates, notably Keats, John Hamilton Reynolds and Bryan Waller Procter ('Barry Cornwall').[24] Other likely influences on

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[22] Fiery Heart: The First Life of Leigh Hunt (London, 2005).

[23] 'Social Genealogy'. Bostetter's article published in the Huntingdon Library Quarterly 19.3 (May 1956), 277-300.

[24] See: Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School, 41.

these projects were the interest in the Decameron generated by the sale of a rare copy of the work from the Duke of Roxburgh's library in 1812, and William Hazlitt's championing of Boccaccio throughout his writings. The celebrated 'Roxburgh Sale' provides the starting point for the fourth chapter in which it is suggested that reports of this may have inspired John Hamilton Reynolds's reading of the Decameron at around the time that he became acquainted with the work of Hunt. Having charted Reynolds's entry into the 'Hunt circle' and his introduction to Keats, the middle section of the chapter is concerned with their (abandoned) joint volume of adaptations from Boccaccio and the influence upon them of Hazlitt. The adaptations of Bryan Waller Procter are introduced in the third section which looks at the way in which responses to the work of Reynolds and Procter in particular echoed the attacks upon the 'Della Cruscans'.

This brings the thesis to the end of 1821 and the publication of Maginn's 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais'. Maginn's critique is presented as an early reaction to the Liberal (1822-4) and leads to a consideration of Blackwood's anticipation of that journal, established in Pisa by Byron, Shelley and Hunt. The Liberal has been discussed in the seminal work by William H. Marshall (1960) and, more recently, by such as Cox, Duncan Wu and Tom Paulin. Much critical emphasis has been placed on Byron's Vision of Judgment and the troubled relationship of Byron, Shelley and Hunt. This thesis, however, analyses Hunt's contributions (in particular, the 'Letters from Abroad' and Book of Beginnings), placing them in an Italian, rather than a British, context. Following Shelley's death and Byron's subsequent departure, Hunt remained in Italy, spending three years in the vicinity of Florence. As the concluding section of the thesis seeks to demonstrate, his continuing experience of Italy would shape his translation of Francesco Redi's Il Bacco in Toscana, (Bacchus in Tuscany, 1825), a poem which had inspired his 'Della Cruscan' antecedent, Robert Merry, during his own residence in Florence some forty years earlier.

CHAPTER I

THE 'RISE AND PROGRESS' OF 'THE *DELLA CRUSCA* SCHOOL'

A few English...whom chance had jumbled together at Florence'

In his introduction to The Baviad. A Paraphrastic Imitation of the First Satire of Persius (originally published in 1791), William Gifford gave the following 'brief account of the rise and progress of that spurious species of poetry' which had occasioned it:

> In 1785, a few English of both sexes, whom chance had jumbled together at Florence, took a fancy to while away their time in scribbling high-flown panegyrics on themselves, and complimentary 'canzonettas' on two or three Italians, who understood too little of the language in which they were written, to be disgusted with them. In this there was not much harm...; but as folly is progressive, they soon wrought themselves into an opinion that they really deserved the fine things which were mutually said and sung of each other. Thus persuaded, they were unwilling their inimitable productions should be confined to the little circle that produced them; they therefore transmitted them hither, and, as their friends were enjoined not to shew them, they were first handed about the town with great assiduity, and then sent to the press...The fever turned to a frenzy: Laura Maria, Carlos, Orlando, Adelaide, and a thousand other nameless names caught the infection; and from one end of the kingdom to the other, all was nonsense and Della Crusca.[1]

Alarmed by an apparent lack of resistance to this 'inundation of absurdity', it was his intention, he explained, 'to try what could be effected by [his] own feeble powers'.

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[1] Baviad and Mæviad, vii-xii, 59.

Many commentators have since credited Gifford with having put an end to the Della Cruscan 'nonsense'. However, as the publication of a second satire in 1795 testifies, the 'streams of folly' had proved difficult to dam up entirely. A passage in the Mæviad in which Gifford reflects upon the 'Cruscan' response to his criticism reveals that, in provoking an outpouring of 'outrageous sonnets, thick as snow', the Baviad had in fact produced the opposite effect.[2] According to W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, the 'English Della Cruscan School' only came into being after, and as a direct result of, Gifford's attack. Until it was so dubbed in the Baviad as a term of reproach, he argues, the 'Cruscan school' existed 'neither in the consciousness of the group which formed it nor in that of the public'.[3]

As the creation of a hostile critic, the 'Della Cruscans' of the Baviad may be likened to the 'Cockneys' of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine (and there are many similarities in the reaction to the two 'schools', as Steven Jones has pointed out).[4] 'Shelley and his tribe' were in fact described as the 'humble imitators of those original arbiters of human fame' in a review of Adonais, published in Blackwood's at the end of 1821.[5] Prior to this, in the 'Cockney School' essays of October 1817 onwards, 'Z.' had set about counteracting the 'pre-existing positive presentations' of the 'Hunt Circle' in much the same way as Gifford had distorted the 'fine things...said and sung' by the so-called Della Cruscan poets themselves. In each case, the alternative, negative image imposed by the critic was to prove influential in shaping subsequent responses to those concerned, both as individuals and as a group.[6]

An example of this in the case of the Della Cruscans is the way in which the

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[2] Baviad and Mæviad, xiv, 114-22.

[3] The English Della Cruscans and Their Time, 29.

[4] Satire and Romanticism, 111-38.

[5] William Maginn, 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais' (Dec. 1821, Part II), 696-700.

[6] See Jefrfrey N. Cox, 'Keats in the Cockney School', Romanticism 2.1 (1996), 27-39 and Edward E. Bostetter, 'The Original Della Cruscans and the Florence Miscellany', Huntingdon Library Quarterly 19.3 (May, 1956), 277.

'few English of both sexes' who met at Florence in 1785 have become victims of 'guilt by association'.[7] Chief among them were Robert Merry, Bertie and Ann Greatheed, William Parsons and Mrs Hester Lynch Piozzi (formerly Thrale), travelling with her second husband the Italian musician Gabriel Mario Piozzi. The group, which regularly gathered at Meghitt's Hotel, were occasionally joined by John Biddulph. However, he did not contribute to their 'scribbling' and has remained 'unknown to fame'.[8] It is largely due to Gifford's introduction of them into his satires that these writers are now generally referred to as Della Cruscans. However, as James L. Clifford (amongst others) pointed, out that this is not strictly correct, since Merry's use of the signature dates from 1787, some two years after the group had dispersed.[9] The name itself is, however, of Florentine origin, and derives from the Accademia della Crusca founded in that city by a small group of literary friends in 1583. As Cecil Grayson explains in an article on the Academy's history for the Bulletin of the Society for Italian Studies, 'the *crusca* (chaff) of the title implied the sifting of the good from the bad' of the Italian language, 'and more specifically the refinement of the vernacular on the model of the writers of the Florentine Trecento' (namely Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio).[10] According to P. W. Clayden, the 'English Della Cruscans'

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[7] Bostetter's term: 'The Original Della Cruscans', 278.

[8] Hargreaves-Mawdsley's term: The English Della Cruscans, 89-90. Biddulph features in Mrs Piozzi's account of an 'expedition' to Vallombrosa, Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of Journey through France, Italy and Germany, 2 vols. (London, 1789), I, 322. Details of his numerous visits to Italy in the years 1769-1795 are given in Joseph Ingamells' A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800 (New Haven and London, 1997), 89.

[9] Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs Thrale), 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1952), 250-1. The Piozzis left Florence, on 12 Sept. 1785, followed shortly afterwards by the Greatheeds and then Parsons. Merry remained until the following summer.

[10] 'Accademia della Crusca, 1583-1983', Bulletin of the Society for Italian Studies, A Journal for Teachers in Higher Education, 16 (Nov. 1983), 10-15.

were 'chaff without grain; bran with the least admixture of flour: the mere refuse the signature Della Crusca implied' (a view echoed by Oliver Elton).[11] However, as his letter to Mrs Piozzi of 20 February 1788 reveals, Merry's own interpretation of the term was a more positive one:

> Perhaps you know that I sometimes write under the signature of Della Crusca, tell me your real opinion of any of those compositions - but I fear you will rather think me *of the Straw* than *of the Bran.*

The poet returned to the metaphor in an further letter, dated 2 June:

> If the Circle of our friendships becomes every day smaller, it should grow warmer as it contracts, like the rays of burning glass - when we have shaken away the chaff though we have less quantity, what remains is solid grain.[12]

By this time the friendship of the Florence group was indeed in decline, Merry having quarrelled with both Parsons and Greatheed (the final break with Mrs Piozzi occurred the following April). Nevertheless, the letter suggests that 'Della Crusca' and the social spirit of the circle formed in 1785 were closely associated in the poet's mind.[13]

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[11] The Early Life of Samuel Rogers (London, 1887), 174-5. A Survey of English Literature, 1780-1830, 2 vols. (London, 1912), I, 35-6, 423.

[12] Merry's letters cited by Clifford in 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 27 (1942-3), 83, 88.

[13] See Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi 1776-1809, ed. Katharine C. Balderston, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1942), II, 714-7, 743. Merry's letter of 2 Jun. recalls Mrs Piozzi's account of the group in her Preface to the Florence Miscellany: '...we shall at least be allow'd to have glisten'd innocently in Italian sunshine; and to have imbibed from it's rays the warmth of mutual Benevolence' (Florence, 1785), 6.

Whilst Gifford distinguished between the brilliant 'exotics' who came over from Italy, and the 'native grubs' who subsequently caught the Della Cruscan 'fever', his introduction to the Baviad gives the impression that much of the poetry published in their 'favoured paper' (the World) derived from Florence.[14] In fact, there were two groups of poets - and separate bodies of work - drawn together under the 'Della Cruscan' label, as Brian Moloney made clear in an article for the Modern Language Review, published in 1965. The two were connected, he explained, 'in that Robert Merry...played a leading part in both, writing in 1787-9 under the pseudonym of *Della Crusca*' (literally, 'of the bran'), 'thus giving his name to the group'. Beyond that, he argues, the 'little circle...jumbled together' in 1785 had little in common with its apparently multitudinous - and later - London 'following'.[15]

As Edward Bostetter points out in his article on the 'Original Della Cruscans', it was for a long time assumed that Merry's adoption of the signature was little more than a 'pretentious and affected' mark of his election to the Academy of that name.[16] In 1934, Roderick Marshall set out to correct the often-repeated error, arguing that this was unlikely to have been the case given that the Accademia della Crusca had been abolished by the Grand Duke Leopold in 1783, along with the Accademia Fiorentina and the Accademia degli Apatisti.[17] It has since been shown that Merry was in Florence much earlier than Marshall believed.[18] Nevertheless, as he points out, it was their replacement, the Real Accademia Fiorentina, which the poet himself

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[14] Baviad and Mæviad, ix-x.

[15] 'The Della Cruscan Poets, the "Florence Miscellany" and the Leopoldine Reforms', 60 (1965), 48. Roderick Marshall, who first highlighted the need to differentiate between the Florence and London Della Cruscans, put forward a similar argument in Italy in English Literature, 174-9.

[16] 'The Original Della Cruscans', 278.

[17] Italy in English Literature, 174-5.

[18] Moloney places Merry in Florence as early as 1782, 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 49.

claimed membership of, referring to the Academy on a number of his title-pages.[19] Marshall does not rule out the possibility that Merry, Greatheed and Parsons called each other 'Della Cruscans' during their residence in Florence, as a sign of their sympathy with the cause of that 'venerable institution' - a cause in which political and literary revolutions were closely bound together.[20] However, Moloney disputes this. Commenting on Merry's use of the pseudonym in his article on the Della Cruscans and 'the Leopoldine reforms', he suggests that it was 'probably no more than a device to enable his close friends to identify him as the author of some very popular poems'.[21]

Gifford's satires encouraged the belief that the 'spurious species of poetry' which gained popularity in the 'periodical sheets' of the late 1780s, and gave rise to the 'Cruscan school', originated in the work of the circle formed in 1785.[22] However, (seemingly) unbeknown to the satirist, Merry had been at the centre of another group prior to this. In the opinion of Hargreaves-Mawdsley, it was in the Arno Miscellany that the foundations of the English Della Cruscan school were 'stumblingly measured

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[19] A possible contributing factor to the confusion may be Merry's Paulina: or, The Russian Daughter, written in Florence and published in London in 1787, the title-page of which describes the author as a 'Member of the Royal Academy of Florence, late la Crusca'.

[20] Italy in English Literature, 174-7. Clifford also believed that Merry had assumed the name 'because it stood in his mind for resistance to oppression and for the priceless heritage of a great poetry'. See 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 81.

[21] 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 50.

[22] Baviad and Mæviad, ix, xin, 59. For example, Jean Mark Longaker, whose account of the Della Cruscans at times relies heavily on that given by Gifford, believed the Miscellany to be merely a selection from a larger body of work, much of which had already appeared in London, The Della Cruscans and William Gifford. The History of a Minor Movement in an Age of Literary Transition (Philadelphia, 1924), 18-19, 29-30.

out', before being 'consolidated...into success' by the London-based poets.[23] This slim volume of verse, which presents itself as the work of the 'Members of a Society called the OZIOSI' (meaning 'idlers'), was printed at the 'Stamperia Bonducciana' in Florence in 1784. It consists of a small collection of 'fugitive pieces', the majority of which are reflections on mortality and the limits of human capability, inspired by the contemporary 'rage of air-balloons' (a 'rage' that would soon attract potent political associations, as we shall see).[24] Together, the verses form a 'poetical correspondence', the starting point for which is Merry's 'Translation' of an epigram published in the 'Florence Gazette':

> The land alone sufficed of yore
> To glut pale Death's destructive train;
> Next mid the waves was felt his power,
> And now he rules th'ærial plain.
> Mankind to surer ruin run.
> Death three realms instead of one.[25]

Accompanying the poetry, is a political tract (written by Merry, under the pseudonym

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[23] The English Della Cruscans, 29.

[24] Horace Walpole refers to the 'rage of air-balloons' in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy in Florence, dated 19 August 1784. His comments on the campaigns of the Duc de Chartres echo the elemental theme which runs throughout the balloon verse of the Arno Miscellany, a copy of which he had recently received, The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Orford ed. Paget Toynbee, 16 vols. (Oxford, 1903-1918), XII (9 Aug. 1784), 175, (8 Jul. 1784), 167.

[25] 'Epigram on the Air Balloon As it appear'd in the Florence Gazette, by the Abbè C...., Translation by Mr M[erry]', The Arno Miscellany; Being a Collection of Fugitive Pieces by the Members of a Society called the OZIOSI at Florence (Florence, 1784), 3.

'Cato') which purports to be an 'Exercise in Composition' by a member of the society who intended offering himself as a candidate in the forthcoming British election.[26]

Unlike the 'inimitable productions' of the following year, the Arno Miscellany of 1784 appears to have remained within the circle of friends for whose amusement it was originally intended, thereby escaping the notice of both Gifford and the British Press; however critics who have referred to it since have presented the volume as an early 'Della Cruscan' project.[27] In all probability the mistaken attribution of the Miscellany to the later Florence group is due to Horace Walpole, whose comments on the 'nonsensical' little 'dab' (indifferent though they are) may well have saved the privately-printed volume from complete obscurity.[28] In a letter to his friend Sir Horace Mann, British Envoy in Florence, of 16 March 1786, Walpole referred to Mrs Piozzi's associates (Merry, Greatheed and Parsons) as 'three of the English bards who assisted in the little garland' left at his house in 1784.[29] It is, however, unclear why he should have done so, as Mann had already confirmed the identities of those responsible for the Miscellany in a letter of 11 September 1784. Walpole had initially

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[26] Advertisement, 'Serious Thoughts upon the present distracted state of Great Britain, Addressed to the Country Gentlemen', by R[obert] M[erry], London, 2 March 1784, Arno Miscellany, 34, 35-43.

[27] See the entry on Merry in the DNB, XXXVIII (2004), 922; Marshall, Italy in English Literature, 180; Clifford, Hester Lynch Piozzi, 250 and 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 76-7. The Miscellany (and membership of 'Gli Oziosi') is attributed to Greatheed in the DNB, XXIII (2004), 478 and in Longaker's Bibliography: The Della Cruscans and William Gifford, 65-7.

[28] Hargreaves-Mawdsley: 'The Arno Miscellany, both because of its indifferent contents and the irregular manner of its appearance, could not have had the slightest chance of making any stir, but a copy came into the hands of Horace Walpole, and gleefully he pokes fun at it as he writes to Mann about his new acquisition on 8th July, 1784...', The English Della Cruscans, 78.

[29] Letters of Horace Walpole, XIII, 371.

believed the volume to be the work of 'young Beckford' - not the only time that Merry and this author were to be confused:[30]

> I know the little book that was left at your house. It was composed in my neighbourhood by the persons indicated by their initials affixed to each performance, Merry and Ramsay. The first was known in England by the name of Captain, as he was then in the Horse Guards, but has since sold out and has resided here some years. My nephew will tell you why. Ramsay's name is well known to you both by his pen and pencil...The third is a Swiss governor of a Mr Dawkins, named Buignon.[31]

It seems likely that the information carried by Mann's nephew related to Merry's long-running affair with Lady Cowper, wife of the acknowledged 'social head' of the English colony in Florence.[32]

Whatever the reason for his error of attribution, the occasion for Walpole's reference to the 'little garland' in his letter of 16 March 1786, was his desire to obtain

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[30] According to Edward Chaney, Beckford's Modern Novel Writing, or the Elegant, Enthusiast and Interesting Emotions of Arabella Bloomville (1796) was initially thought be the work of Merry, The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance (London and Portland, Oregan, 1998), 306n26. This may shed some light on a passage in Mrs Piozzi's diary for October 1804, in which she referred to Merry's having ridiculed her in 'his *Azemia*' (reviewed in the Monthly Mirror for August 1797) - another of Beckford's novels. See Thraliana, II, 1061&n.

[31] Mann's letter quoted from the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence, ed. W. S. Lewis, 48 vols. (New Haven, London and Oxford, 1937-1983), XII, 522-3. Hargreaves-Mawdsley also identifies Captains Rippington and Blankett and a Mr Bromley as members of the 'Oziosi', The English Della Cruscans, 70.

[32] Ibid. 65-6.

a copy of a 'plump octavo' which he had recently been lent.[33] This was the Florence Miscellany, in which were gathered the 'high-flown panegyrics' of Merry, Greatheed, Parsons and Mrs Piozzi.[34] Rather like the earlier volume, it appears that the second miscellany was (in part, at least) regarded by its authors as an amusing diversion, intended for private distribution amongst their friends and acquaintances. It was as such that Mrs Piozzi presented the new venture when recounting its origins in a letter to Samuel Lysons, dated 27 July 1785:

> I have been playing the baby, and writing nonsense to divert our English friends here, who do the same thing themselves, and swear they will print the collection, and call it an Arno Miscellany.[35]

The reference to the title of the earlier volume suggests that Merry had at the very least discussed his previous collaboration with his new friends. Hargreaves-Mawdsley thought it unlikely that Mrs Piozzi would actually have been allowed to see a copy of the Arno Miscellany .[36] Nevertheless, it is possible that the initial idea for the two volumes came from the same source.

In his discussion of the Arno Miscellany, Hargreaves-Mawdsley dated the 'germ of the quaint literary alliance that was soon to take place' to Merry's visit to the

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[33] Letters, XIII, 371.

[34] Gifford's account of the Florence group at work is a satire upon Mrs Piozzi's Preface to the Miscellany in which she states that they wrote the verses in order 'to say kind things of each other'. See Baviad and Mæviad, vii, the Florence Miscellany, 5 and Mrs Piozzi's Observations and Reflections, in which she recalls how their time with Merry and the Greatheeds passed in 'reciprocations of confidential friendship and mutual esteem', I, 275.

[35] Mrs Piozzi's letter cited in The English Della Cruscans, 96. The volume is similarly described by Mrs Piozzi in her diary for June 1786, Thraliana, II, 643.

[36] The English Della Cruscans, 96, 101.

Ramsays on 15 October 1783. On that occasion, it seems, Merry presented the painter with a book of poems; 'what book', the critic states, 'we have no means of knowing'.[37] It is surely not improbable, however, that this was in fact a copy of one of two collections of verse which Moloney describes in his article on the Florence Della Cruscans. The first of these, which contained an Ode written by Merry on the subject of Rodney's defeat of De Grasse in the West Indies, was published in Florence in 1782. As would be the practice in both of the miscellanies, Merry's Ode was accompanied by a translation and an imitation. The former (written in French), was provided by Sir Wogan Browne, the latter (in Italian), by Michelangiolo Gianetti. The second collection was distributed by Merry in 1783 and is the more likely to be that presented to Ramsay. This volume contained 'carefully copied' versions of poems which would later appear in the Florence Miscellany. It would therefore almost certainly have been known to the 'little circle' of 1785.[38]

As Gifford indicated in the introduction to his satires, the four English poets were joined in their 'scribbling' by 'two or three Italians'. These were Lorenzo Pignotti, Ippolito Pindemonte, Angiolo D'Elci and one 'D. M. L.', whom Moloney identifies as Marco Lastri, the probable author of an enthusiastic review of Merry's earlier collection, printed in the Florentine Novelle Letterarie (which also took notice of the Miscellany).[39] The presence of original Italian poetry and the treatment of specifically Italian themes in the volume of 1785, is one reason to draw a distinction between the work of the two groups featured in the Baviad. Another, is the fact that,

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[37] The English Della Cruscans, 70.

[38] 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 49. A note in the Miscellany indicates that eight copies of the 'Hymn to Death', the 'Ode to Indolence' and the 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Rome' had already been printed privately (according to Moloney, the earlier collection also contained the 'Ode on Madness', although no reference to this is made in the Miscellany). A further note states that Merry's 'To Diana' had previously appeared, though 'very imperfectly', in an English Newspaper.

[39] 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 48-9.

when challenged by Parsons, Gifford actually claimed to have been unaware that 'such a treasure' as the Florence Miscellany existed until *after* he had written both the Baviad and the Mæviad:

> Mr Parsons says I obtained a copy of it by breach of confidence, and seemed to fancy, good man! that I derived some prodigious advantage from it...He might have seen, if passion had not rendered him as blind as a millhorse, that I constantly allude to poems published separately in the periodical sheets of the day, and afterwards collected with great parade by Bell and others. I never looked into the Florence Miscellany but once; and the only use I then made of it, was to extract a sounding passage from the odes of that deep-mouthed Theban, Bertie Greatheed, Esq.[40]

Although a 'cargo of poetry' from Florence did indeed find its way into the 'periodical sheets of the day', these were not amongst the poems subsequently 'collected by Bell'. Contrary to the impression given by Gifford, it was the European Magazine which began printing extracts from the Florence Miscellany in February 1786 (followed, in January 1787, by the Gentleman's Magazine) - some time before Merry made his first appearance in the World (or, World and Fashionable Advertiser, as it was originally known) under the pseudonym of 'Della Crusca'.[41]

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[40] Baviad and Mæviad, ixn.

[41] Hargreaves-Mawdsley gives a full account of the extracts printed in these magazines in The English Della Cruscans, 139-42. The first issue of the World appeared on 1 Jan. 1787, not, as Gifford - and consequently Longaker - believed, before the Florence Miscellany came into being. See the introduction to the Baviad, and The Della Cruscans and William Gifford, 9, 18, 29.

The 'tribe of Bell'

It was in the columns of the World daily paper, established early in 1787 by Captain Edward Topham, that the second group - or, London Della Cruscans - were brought together.[42] As his response to Parson's accusation regarding his use of the Florence Miscellany confirms, this was Gifford's chief target (it is also the group upon which Maginn would base his comparison with 'Mr Shelly and his tribe').[43] Drawing on Gifford's satires, and subsequent work on the Della Cruscans, it is possible to compile a list of some of the leading figures associated with this group, together with the signatures they are believed to have written under:[44]

Thomas Adney	Yenda
Miles Peter Andrews	Arley
George Monck Berkeley	The Bard
George Colman (younger)	
Hannah Cowley	Anna Matilda, *Emma*
Bertie Greatheed	Reuben, Arno
Edward Jerningham	Benedict, *The Bard*
Robert Merry	Della Crusca, *Henry*, *Leonardo*, Rinaldo[45]
Frederick Pilon	
Mary Robinson	Laura, Laura Maria, Julia, Oberon, Armida

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[42] See The English Della Cruscans, 157-9, Stephen Koss, The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain, 2 vols. (London, 1981), I, 43, and Lucyle Werkmeister, The London Daily Press, 1772-1792 (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1963), 153-4.

[43] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 695.

[44] Names in italics are speculatively attributed to the poets concerned in The British Album, ed. John Bell, 2 vols., 3rd edn. (London, 1790).

[45] Merry is identified as Rinaldo (and, incorrectly, as Ignotus) in Mary Robinson's Poems (London, 1791).

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Gifford also attacked the poet Anthony Pasquin (John Williams). However, as Hargreaves-Mawdsley points out, he was himself a critic of the 'knot of fantastic coxcombs' behind the World venture.[46]

In 1788, the Poetry of the World, a two-volume anthology published with 'great parade' by John Bell (printer of both the World and the Oracle), gathered the principal contributors to that paper together as a group for posterity, providing Gifford with the model for his 'Cruscan school'. Subsequent editions appeared with the title the British Album, and when Gifford embarked upon his second satire, the Mæviad (completed in 1793, though not published until 1795), it was to the Album that he 'ran' in order to ensure that he did not overlook any of the so-called 'poetical eminence of the day'.[47] Of the group of writers associated with the World, none were more 'eminent' than 'Della Crusca' and 'Anna Matilda'. 'Anna Matilda' was the object of much speculation - Mrs Piozzi, Anna Seward, Mary Robinson, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (to whom the anthologies are dedicated) and even Merry himself were at one time or another suspected of being behind this pseudonym. 'Anna Matilda' was eventually identified as Hannah Cowley, better known as a writer of comedies such as The Belle's Stratagem (1780).[48] Merry made his first appearance as 'Della Crusca' on 29 June 1787 with a poem entitled 'The Adieu and Recall to Love'. At this point, Gifford states, 'the two "great luminaries" of the age, as Mr Bell calls them, fell desperately in love with each other'.[49]

The correspondence which ensued has been the focus of much attention in

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[46] See Williams' 'An Irregular Ode, as it was performed at the Beginning of the World, by three notorious old women, Juggy Andrews, Pegg Topham and Moll Bell', Poems by Anthony Pasquin, 2 vols. (London, 1789), I, 187-90.

[47] Baviad and Mæviad, 63-4.

[48] See The English Della Cruscans, 172, and Thraliana, II, 740.

[49] Baviad and Mæviad, xii.

criticism of the Della Cruscans and is regarded by Jerome McGann as the 'defining event of Della Cruscan writing'.[50] The fact that the poems published in the World are generally considered to exemplify 'Della Cruscanism fully-blown' is, in itself, an argument for distinguishing between the 'Della Cruscans of London' and the 'Della Cruscans of Florence'.[51] In Romantic Theatricality, Judith Pascoe adds a further dimension to the debate by arguing that it was actually 'women such as Cowley and Robinson who embroidered on this already ornate mode and turned it into a recognisable school of poetry' and not, as is commonly asserted, Merry.[52] Certainly, by the time the 'celebrated correspondence' came to an end, after Merry and Cowley met in the summer of 1789, Merry was beginning to move away from the World.[53] His attentions were now turned towards the French Revolution and, according to Hargreaves-Mawdsley, a more serious side of his character was beginning to emerge.[54] When the Laurel of Liberty, a poem dedicated to the National Assembly of France, appeared in 1790 (published in London, by Bell), the author presented himself, not as 'Della Crusca', but as 'Robert Merry, A.M. Member of the Royal Academy of Florence'. Two further volumes of the Poetry of the World were published in 1791 (by Ridgway, rather than Bell). However, 'the original Della

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[50] The Poetics of Sensibility, 81.

[51] Hargreaves-Mawdsley's term: The English Della Cruscans, 169.

[52] Romantic Theatricality, 69.

[53] Two poems marked the end of the correspondence: Merry's 'The Interview' and Cowley's 'To Della Crusca, who said, "When I am dead, write my Elegy"', printed in the World on 16 and 19 June 1789, respectively. According to the dramatist Frederick Reynolds, the discovery that 'the ideal goddess of his idolatry' was a 'plain, respectable, matronly lady' was a great disappointment to Merry; The Life and Times of Frederick Reynolds. Written by Himself, 2 vols. (London, 1826), II, 187-8.

[54] The English Della Cruscans, 191, 205. M. Ray Adams puts forward a similar argument in 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', Studies in Romanticism 2.1 (Autumn, 1962), 29.

Cruscans...had ceased to take any interest in the project' and (Gifford's satires aside) this was to be the last collective appearance of the London group.[55] Although its influence would last 'well into the 1830s', the 'phenomenon of Della Cruscanism' was 'effectively over' by 1791.[56]

The political face of 'Della Crusca'

In one of his Last Essays (1833), Charles Lamb's 'Elia' examines a number of 'Popular Fallacies'. Among them is the maxim: 'That you must Love me and Love my Dog'. His argument, that those who insist upon this 'must not complain' if, for example, 'the house be rather thin of suitors', concludes with 'an excellent story to this moral...told of Merry, of Della Cruscan memory'. The story, in brief, is as follows: Having, 'in tender youth', 'wooed and won' a 'modest appanage [appendage?] to the Opera', who 'seemed to him a native violet, that had been transplanted by some rude accident into that exotic and artificial hotbed', Merry had agreed to 'the attendance of her friends and kindred at the approaching solemnity'. Startled, by the arrival in 'six coaches' of 'the whole corps du Ballet', Merry realised 'that he was about to marry—a dancer'. He had no sooner regained his composure than he was greeted by the bride on the arm of 'no less a person than Signor Delp[h]ini himself'. The 'thought of so extraordinary a paternity', it seems, 'quite overcame him':

> Slipping away under some pretence from the bride and her motley adherents, poor Merry took horse from back yard to the nearest sea-coast, from which, shipping himself to America, he shortly after consoled himself with a more congenial match in the person of Miss Brunton;

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[55] The English Della Cruscans, 223, 243.

[56] See Jon Mee's entry on Della Cruscanism in An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age, 482.

> relieved from his intended clown father, and a bevy of painted buffas for bridesmaids.[57]

This is, indeed, the Merry of 'Della Cruscan memory'; apt to 'take fire...at every female signature in the papers' and, therefore, prone to such 'amatory' entanglements.[58] It is the same Merry who had famously rushed, with 'ecstatic feelings', to the home of 'his adored Anna Matilda' only to discover 'the ideal goddess of his idolatry' in the person of 'a plain, respectable, matronly lady' (Hannah Cowley).[59] Beneath the surface of the story, as told by 'Elia', however, there lies a different Merry. This is the Merry to whom the idea of escaping on horseback a 'match' which he seemed 'solicitous to avoid' had apparently been recommended by the radical, Horne Tooke.[60] It is, moreover, the Merry who, far from fleeing 'a bevy of painted buffas', had, in fact, taken the decision to go to America in the face of long-standing financial difficulties; difficulties in which he had latterly been assisted by William Godwin.[61] In the opinion of M. Ray Adams, his association with such figures would, in itself, suggest that there was 'more substance in Merry than he has been credited with'.[62] It should be noted that his departure took place some five years after his marriage to Ann Brunton, during which interval his activities, both at home and on the Continent, had led to his being the subject of government suspicion.[63] This is the Merry that would begin to emerge from behind the 'Della Crusca' signature towards

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[57] Quoted from: The Essays of Elia, ed. Alfred Ainger (London, 1883), 367-8.

[58] See Baviad and Mæviad, xii-iv, 43n.

[59] See Life and Times of Frederick Reynolds, II, 187-8.

[60] See John Taylor's Records of My Life, 2 vols. (London, 1832), I, 152-3.

[61] See William St. Clair, The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family (London and Boston, 1989), 164, 256, 536.

[62] 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 32.

[63] The Merrys' marriage took place on 26 Aug. 1791. They left England in Sept. 1796.

the end of the 1780s, at which period the poet's 'dandy face' is said to have become, 'for all his assumed insouciance, the face first of preoccupation, and later of obsession'.[64]

The transformation in Merry's political views is generally considered to have originated in his 'conversion' to the French Revolution during the summer of 1789.[65] In his Preface to 'th'enthusiastic verse' with which he marked that 'dawn of truth's expanding rays', Merry expressed doubt as to whether indeed it was possible for an Englishman to visit France at this juncture, and not feel his heart beat with transport on finding himself in a new 'Land Liberty':

> Where Wisdom can assert her injur'd cause,
> And Pride must yield to nature's honest laws;
> Where talents, merit, virtue, genius rise,
> And baffled, vain, factitious greatness flies:
> While circling realms attentive pause to scan
> An æra pregnant with the hopes of Man![66]

Wrapped in Freedom's 'extatic trance', the poet addresses his 'COMPATRIOT Trav'lers', urging them to shake off apathy and 'Examine what [they] have been,—may be,—ARE!'. If any should hesitate, he points - by way of incentive - to the 'chaplet wet with holy dews' prepared for the people of France by 'eternal Virtue's hand divine', in honour of that nation having '[exerted] herself for the general future advantage of the whole human race'.[67] This call to his fellow travellers gives some insight into the process of 'conversion' that Merry was himself undergoing at this

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[64] See Hargreaves-Mawdsley in The English Della Cruscans, 191, 205. Adams puts forward a similar argument in 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 29.

[65] Adams' term. Ibid. 27.

[66] The Laurel of Liberty, A Poem (London, 1790), v, 9.

[67] Ibid. 23-6&n.

period. The same 'IMMORTAL SPIRIT' which had pushed back the clouds on 'alter'd GAUL['s]...Horizon', removed the grime from Merry's portrait, transforming him from the 'insouciant dandy' he had been, to the 'committed radical' he was to remain throughout the rest of his life.[68] Nevertheless, if Frederick Reynolds is to be believed, the poet might yet have settled for a very different kind of 'chaplet'.

Looking back on Merry's career in his autobiography, Reynolds recalled that the real turning point came in 1790, with the death of the Poet Laureate Thomas Warton (21 May). Around the time of the fateful meeting with 'Anna Matilda', the dramatist noted, Merry had 'very earnestly sought' to be appointed Laureate himself:

> ...no doubt his application would have succeeded, had not Mr Pye, who had been a member for Berkshire, at that very period, fallen prostrate at the feet of the Muses. A country member soliciting the office of Poet Laureat, was a novel circumstance, and altogether not to be resisted, and therefore, poor Merry, disappointed in this hope as he had been in others, gradually and imperceptibly adopted the cause of democracy, when another moment of indecision in the breast of a Knight of the Shire, might have fated Della Crusca to praise loyalty and appendages, during the remainder of his life.[69]

According to Reynolds, the poet had been supported in his 'application' by the 'strenuous exertions' of Topham, Andrews and a number of 'others with their friends in power'. Among these, it seems, was Richard Brinsley Sheridan, a former manager of the World's political department and one of the 'poetical eminence' whom Gifford found named when he 'ran for the Album'.[70] Sheridan had apparently assisted Merry in the composition of an 'Ode on the Restoration of his Majesty' which was delivered

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[68] Laurel of Liberty, 27. The English Della Cruscans, 206, 216.

[69] Life and Times, II, 187-8.

[70] For a full account of The World and its politics, see Werkmeister, The London Daily Press, 150-218. Sheridan's departure discussed at 165-6.

by Mrs Siddons at a Subscription Gala given at the Opera House on 21 April 1789.[71] The 'loyal ode' - likened to Warton's 'Ode on His Majesty's Birth-day, 1789' - has been described as an 'olive branch' intended to further Merry's campaign for the Laureateship, by ingratiating him with royalty.[72] However, others have pointed out that the poet's association with members of 'that section of the Whig party with which the Prince of Wales identified himself' would have gone against him.[73] According to the DNB, Merry's candidature was indeed rendered 'hopeless' by the fact that his revolutionary principles were 'already the talk of the town' by the time the post became available.[74] Whatever the reason, Merry's 'earnest' efforts failed almost immediately. Following what may have been her final meeting with 'the renowned Della Crusca' on 26 April 1789, Mrs Piozzi noted in her diary that the 'Ode' written with Sheridan was 'not liked'. '[Merry's] hopes (whatever they were)', she remarked, 'seem blown away'.[75]

By the end of summer 1789 Merry was in Paris, having gone there, from Switzerland, in order that he might not be 'misled by Errour', or 'imbibe prejudice from Hearsay' in respect of an event of which many had 'pretended to think meanly'. Whilst there he attended meetings of the National Assembly, which he later praised for the zealous 'love of Freedom' and 'integrity of patriotism' which he perceived to be behind the evident 'Disorder' and 'impetuosity'. Following in the footsteps of his

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[71] In a letter to Mrs Piozzi of 23 Apr. 1789 Merry insisted that, although he had had some part in the 'Ode' - having been 'applied to on the occasion from a quarter [he] could not refuse' - 'a considerable portion was from a much abler pen than [his]'. See 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 92.

[72] Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 195-6, 202-3, 207.

[73] See, for example, Bostetter who remarks upon the timing of Gifford's initial attack and suggests that it was designed to discredit the supporters of the Prince, 'The Original Della Cruscans', 299.

[74] DNB, XXXVII (1894), 296.

[75] Thraliana, II, 473.

former acquaintances Alfieri and Pindemonte, the poet also witnessed the festivities at the ruins of the Bastille - a 'blissful' memory which he would indulge when troubled by 'prophecies of dread' regarding the fate of Great Britain, whose 'boasted Liberty' he now feared to be perhaps but 'a Name'.[76] Contrary to the impression given by Reynolds, Merry's 'gradual' adoption of the 'cause of democracy' was, therefore, already well under way by the time he returned to London towards the end of the following Spring. As Pye '[fell] prostrate at the feet of the Muses', Merry prepared to invoke his own 'Genius or Muse' to assist him in the attainment of a new laurel. As he made clear in the opening invocation, the 'hastily woven' Laurel of Liberty was to be different from any for which he had previously sought her aid:

> Not *now* he strays where other times are brought
> By mem'ry's powerful magic to the thought,
> With all that Folly plann'd, of Pride essay'd,
> The earliest efforts men or monarchs made;
> Nor calls the shad'wy trains again to birth,
> Who trod, a moment trod, the realms of earth;
> Valour's rough sons, and Beauty's daughters fair,
> And those that bled, and those that triumph'd there,
> Ambition's Robbers, Poets with their lay,
> Alike th'important nothings of a day.
> Not *now* , he fondly courts thee to renew
> The lovesick song, some tremulous maid to woo;
> As when his youthful hand was wont to fling
> A grateful incense to the op'ning Spring
> ...
> Nor yet, *as once*, for graceful COWLEY's brow,
> He blends the laurel and the myrtle bough,

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[76] Laurel of Liberty, v, 31-3, 37.

> Drinks her rich strain with extacy divine,
> Dares the bold flight, and maddens on the line;
> *But still a nobler, grander them inspires,*
> *And Love is lost in Reason's purer fires.* [my italics][77]

At the heart of this new 'nobler theme' were the 'sentiments of Justice, Liberty and Humanity' which Merry was determined to voice in spite of any 'inconvenience' which may arise from doing so. Whatever his feelings had been in April 1789, it would appear that 'Della Crusca' was no longer inclined to the unquestioning 'praise of loyalty and appendages':

> Much as I love my Country, I should disdain to flatter it at the expense of veracity, or to immolate the worth and virtue of other nations at the shrine of its vanity, upon the alter of its Pride.[78]

This statement, made in the Preface to the Laurel of Liberty, was underlined by this decision to dedicate it 'To the National Assembly of France, The True and Zealous Representatives of A Free People, With Every Sentiment of Admiration and Respect'.

Although Reynolds (like many other critics and commentators of the period) continued to refer to Merry as 'Della Crusca', the poet had published the Laurel of Liberty under his own name. Moloney regards this as evidence that the 'Della Crusca' tag was never intended as a 'symbol of resistance to oppression'.[79] However, this need not necessarily have been the case. If, as Moloney suggests, 'Della Crusca' can have meant little to the readers of the World, then it would presumably have meant even less to the French Assembly to which the poem was not only dedicated,

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[77] Laurel of Liberty, 7, 9.

[78] Preface, Ibid. vi-v.

[79] 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 50-1.

but also presented.[80] Merry's statement, in the preface to a previous poem (Diversity), that the signature was in fact given to his poems by 'the CONDUCTOR OF THE WORLD' lends weight to Moloney's argument that it was probably no more than a means by which his friends could identify him as the author of the poems printed in that paper.[81] However, it does not settle the matter of its original significance. Topham may have taken his inspiration from the description of Merry as a 'Member of the Royal Academy of Florence, late La Crusca' on the title-page of Paulina (published in London early in 1787); a description which others have read as a 'public avowal of his romantic yearning' after the suppressed *Accademia della Crusca*'.[82]

It is the image of the suppressed Academy which lies at the centre of the debate surrounding the political significance of 'Della Crusca', with Marshall, Clifford and Bostetter all taking the view that Merry had joined the Real Accademia Fiorentina because 'it threw him into the arms of former Della Cruscans, literary and political malcontents who secretly hated [the Grand Duke] Leopold and longed to restore that venerable institution'.[83] Whilst admitting that Merry had a 'latent liberalism and loathing of despotism', Moloney argues that there was little evidence of this during his time in Florence: 'must Merry have been a liberal in 1785', he asks, 'because he was

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[80] An account of the presentation of the poem and a treatise 'On the Nature of Free Government' (1792) given in the Monthly Magazine (1799, Part I), 256-7&n. is cited by Hargreaves-Mawdsley: The English Della Cruscans, 216, 257. Also, DNB, XXXVII (1894), 296. The Public Advertiser for 8 Jun. 1792 also referred to Merry's visit to France 'for the purpose of presenting his last Ode on the French Revolution to the National Assembly' (although it is not clear whether this refers to the Laurel of Liberty or his 1791 'Ode for the fourteenth of July'), see The London Daily Press, 358.

[81] Diversity. A Poem (London, 1788), viii-ix.

[82] Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 29.

[83] Marshall, Italy in English Literature, 176-7, Clifford, 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 76-7, Bostetter, 'The Original Della Cruscans', 279.

one in 1790?'.[84] It is generally acknowledged that Merry's contributions to the Florence Miscellany were less political than those of his companions (Mrs Piozzi aside). However, there is one section in the Laurel of Liberty which provides a clear link between the Merry of 1789-90, who urged his compatriots on in the fight against Tyranny, and the Merry of 1785, who had rushed back to Meghitt's hotel, from his meetings at the new academy, and 'fire[d] young William Parsons' to write verses attacking the Austrian regime:[85]

> O SWEET FIRENZE! what are all thy stores,
> Thy PARIAN VENUS which the world adores,
> What are thy treasur'd gems thy tow'ry domes,
> Whilst in thy halls the spectre Slav'ry roams?
> ...
> These but a poor, a transient comfort give,
> To men, without volition doom'd to live.
> Oft when the Star of Evening in the West
> Sate like a Phoenix on her burning nest;
> I've mark'd thy sighing youths, and damsels fair,
> Tread the near meads, and whisper their despair,
> Seek myrtled FIESOLE's cool bow'rs to weep,
> And pour the bitter curse 'not loud but deep'.
> For hard was HE that govern'd,—tho' his name
> By Flatt'ry written on the rolls of fame,
> Has sometimes lur'd an undiscerning praise,
> To swell the trav'ler's page, the poet's lays;
> Yet I have view'd him oft on ARNO's side,
> In false humility's dissembled pride,

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[84] Moloney 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 55-6.

[85] Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 19.

Have seen him give each abject passion scope,
Scowl at each bliss, and wither ev'ry hope,
Cherish base treach'ry, and to fav'rites yield
That Sword, which Justice ought alone to wield,
Force gen'rous social confidence to end,
And tear from each the solace of a friend.
O! Since your iron age at length is o'er,
And your stern Duke shall vex your peace no more,
But ris'n to empire, leave the pas'tral vale
To vent his malice on a larger scale;
O may ye now! from oppression free,
Revive to bliss, and native dignity,
May kinder FERDINAND your ills remove,
And gain your confidence and win your love![86]

The image in this passage of the oppressed Florentine youths is in contrast to the 'gay youths, and festive maids' who are seen advancing upon the site of the Bastille later in the poem.[87] This gives some idea of the way in which his recent experiences in Paris had prompted Merry to reflect upon his years in Florence. The two were clearly associated in his mind. However, Merry's retrospective attack on the Grand Duke is often regarded as having as much (if not more) to do with 'personal animosity' as it has to do with those 'common sentiments' which he refers to in his Preface to the Laurel of Liberty.[88] This is certainly the view that Walpole took when describing the poem in a letter to Mary Berry of 8-11 November 1790: 'there is', he wrote, 'a violent tirade against a considerable personage, who, it is supposed, the author was jealous of,

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[86] The Laurel of Liberty, 15-17.

[87] Ibid. 31.

[88] See, for example, Moloney, 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 56, Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 211 and Marshall, Italy in English Literature, 183-4.

as too much favoured a few years ago by a certain Countess'[Lady Cowper].[89]

The speculation concerning the motivation behind Merry's attack on Leopold - and therefore the question of the political intent behind the Florence Miscellany - calls to mind comments made by Mrs Piozzi in her Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany (1789):

> The truth is, much of an English traveller's pleasure is taken off at Florence by the incessant complaints of a government he does not understand, and of oppressions he cannot remedy. 'Tis dull to hear people lament the want of liberty, to which I question whether they have any pretensions; and without knowing *whether it is the tyranny or the tyrant they complain of* [my italics]. Tedious however and most uninteresting are their accounts of grievances which a subject of Great Britain has much ado to comprehend, and more to pity; as they are now all heart-broken, because they must say their prayers in their own language and not in Latin, which, how it can be construed into misfortune, a Tuscan alone can tell.[90]

Mrs Piozzi was, arguably, right to question the validity of the Tuscans' 'incessant complaints', unlike her 'generous-hearted young' companions who had been somewhat 'taken in' by the 'dissentients' among their Italian friends.[91] Certainly, a very different view of the Grand Duke's rule to that offered by Merry is found in an article on Howard's translation of the Edict of the Grand Duke of Tuscany for the Reform of Criminal Law in his Dominions, published in the Monthly Review for August 1789.[92]

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[89] Letters of Horace Walpole, XIV, 316-7.

[90] Observations and Reflections, I, 301-2.

[91] See The English Della Cruscans, 17-20 and 'The Della Cruscan poets', 56-7.

[92] '"Edict of the Grand Duke of Tuscany", for the Reform of Criminal Law in his Dominions. Translated from the Italian. Together with the Original', Monthly Review (Aug. 1789), 120.

Here, Leopold is presented as a 'beneficent prince, whose study it has been, for many years past, to diminish the evils to which human society necessarily gives birth, and to augment the happiness of his people'. 'Some complaints that have been raised in Tuscany' are attributed to the fact that 'temporary distress' and 'partial evils' accompany 'every great reform'.[93] Mrs Piozzi's own 'observations' on these complaints cast further doubt on the merits of the cause adopted by her fellow travellers in 1785. Nevertheless, her comments do show that the Florence Miscellany was put together in a politically-charged climate - a climate which had little to do with any personal 'grievances' that Merry may or may not have had against his supposed 'vindictive love rival', the Grand Duke.[94]

It was largely as a result of Mrs Piozzi's apparent lack of interest in the complaints raised in Tuscany that much of the early criticism of the Florence Miscellany overlooked the political social conditions in which the volume was produced. She goes on in her Observations and Reflections to remark that she 'would rather talk of their [the Tuscans'] gallery than their government'.[95] This is, of course, precisely what she does do in her Preface to the Miscellany which, in the opinion of Bostetter, now reads 'as if it were deliberately designed to prejudice the book as a collection of insouciant trivia'.[96] Mrs Piozzi's own estimate of the volume as a pleasant 'diversion' may be viewed in terms of her appreciation of Merry's 'sweet Ode to Summer', in which she found respite from the unequalled 'clamours and depredations' of the cicala (a description which invites comparison with that of the

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[93] '"Edict of the Grand Duke"', 120. The Grand Duke is similarly represented in Christopher Duggan's A Concise History of Italy, (Cambridge, 1994), 82.

[94] Marshall's term: Italy in English Literature, 183. Most critics who refer to Merry's affair with Lady Cowper present Leopold as having been his rival. Moloney, however, seemed to think that she was not the Grand Duke's mistress in 1785, 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 56.

[95] Observations and Reflections, I, 296.

[96] 'The Original Della Cruscans', 280.

Tuscans themselves).[97] For this reason, she is generally considered to have been uninterested in, if not entirely oblivious to the political motivation behind some of the poems contributed by her associates.[98] It is worth noting, however, that in her diary for 1 March 1785 - some three months prior to her arrival in Florence - Mrs Piozzi suggested a need for the kind of caution which would later be taken in the printing of the Miscellany. Copying out the following 'simple Lines', written in reply to some verses left at their house in Milan by William Parsons, she comments that she 'durst not send 'em for fear of their being seen in this Land of Power, and Prejudice':

> Whilst Saints & Martyrs now once more we see
> Fall daily by an *Emperor's Decree*;
> Our David safe on Britain's rocky Coast,
> Of British Votaries makes his Honest Boast;
> Pleased while so well you celebrate his Day,
> Possess his Harp, and emulate his Lay.[99]

It may have been to this particular section of Parson's offering - a call for her to return to Britain, supposedly from the spirit of her 'once-lov'd Friend', Dr Johnson - that Mrs Piozzi was responding in her diary entry:

> Unknown each foolish Prejudice that binds
> In other Countries, Subjugated Minds;
> The Spirit wide diffused of equal Laws,

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[97] Merry's 'Ode' contains a description of the cicala which Mrs Piozzi preferred to any she had read before and which made her feel 'less discontented' with the insect's noise, Observations and Reflections, I, 296. Florence Miscellany, 5, 109-12.

[98] See, for example, Marshall Italy in English Literature, 177-8, Clifford, Hester Lynch Piozzi, 251-2, and Bostetter, 'The Original Della Cruscans', 280-2.

[99] Thraliana, II, 634.

Exalts the humble, and the haughty awes:
Thro' ev'ry Rank the liberal Flame is spread,
And conscious Independence lifts her head.[100]

Parson's verses were later included in The Florence Miscellany in their entirety. However, the following extract from his 'Epistle to the Marquis Ippolito Pindemonte at Verona', in which the criticism of the government is much more direct, is one of two passages which were initially omitted from the volume and then printed on separate slips for private circulation:

Now, sever'd from those seats of social joy
The Arts alone my musing hours employ,
For now no more the blue-eyed Pleasures rove
Arno's green banks, or Boboli thy grove!
O'er the chang'd scene his baleful pinions spread,
While the fierce Austrian Eagle rears the head,
Like tim'rous doves his ravening beak they fly
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky![101]

Lines from Greatheed's 'A Dream', in which he attributes a decline in the arts and sciences to the abolishment of the Della Cruscan Academy, were also inserted later. However, his 'Ode on Apathy', with its call to the 'sons of Italy' to prove that their 'proud land of old renown'd' may once again shine 'transcendent' in the beams of 'radiant Glory', appears to have been printed without omissions.[102] That it was passed by the censor, Moloney argues, 'makes one suspect that these precautions

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[100] Thraliana, II, 633. Parson's poem appears in the Florence Miscellany as 'Verses to Mrs Piozzi placed under a print of Dr Johnson in her dining room', 77-9.

[101] Ibid. 27.

[102] Ibid. 9, 129-31.

were not necessary'.[103]

That they were deemed necessary, of course, may explain why Merry waited until 1790 to write his own attack on the Grand Duke. When he published the Laurel of Liberty the climate of the times had changed and Merry had 'nothing to lose'.[104] In 1785 this was not the case, for although his reputation was falling into decline by the time his friends began to leave Florence that Autumn, Merry had held an enviable position within the English community. It is not entirely true, however, to say that he displayed a greater concern with 'pursuing his literary career and his love affairs' than with politics at this time.[105] Mrs Piozzi may have identified Greatheed as the future politician of the group, yet it was Merry who had experimented with the election address in the tract appended to the Arno Miscellany.[106] Moloney, who regards the speech as a parody, asserts that the poet 'does not appear to have any marked liberal tendencies' in the volume of 1784. However, Hargreaves-Mawdsley disagrees. As he points out, there is in the 'Serious Thoughts' evidence of liberal sentiments which come more to the fore in the Laurel of Liberty, not least in Merry's 'parting exhortation' to the country gentlemen to whom the paper was addressed:[107]

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[103] 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 55.

[104] See Hargreaves-Mawdsley on this point, The English Della Cruscans, 207.

[105] Moloney and Clifford highlight Mrs Piozzi's 'La Partenza', in which she advises one of her associates to give up 'trif[ling] with Italian Dames' and seek a wife in 'Britain's chaster Isle'. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, however, has shown that this advice is more likely to have been directed at Parsons. See 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 55, 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 77 and The English Della Cruscans, 103-5.

[106] See 'La Partenza', Florence Miscellany, 209-10. Hargreaves-Mawdsley points out that Allan Ramsay's 'Essay on the Right of Conquest' (Florence, 1783) has been attributed to Greatheed. This may explain why Greatheed was thought to have been involved in the earlier Miscellany, The English Della Cruscans, 69.

[107] See 'The Della Cruscan Poets', 50 and The English Della Cruscans, 77-8.

> I will give it to you, Gentlemen...to be earnestly attentive, in that great, and Solicitous Cause, the salvation of Liberty; Liberty the resplendent gem that has led our venerable ancestors to the bowers of Elysium; Liberty the precious pledge of moral Excitement; that glorious Liberty, I say, which strictly connected with foreign attachments and domestic differences, may yet farther the dignity of America, and the East Indies; at the same time that it may throw a blaze of lustre upon ourselves, our posterity, and the Kingdom of Great Britain.[108]

Merry's verses on the exploits of the Montgolfier brothers may be typical of the 'fashion of the time - the future 'Della Cruscans', Frederick Pilon and Frederick Reynolds were also taking advantage of the 'Balloon mania' of 1783. However, the following lines from 'The Air Balloon' stand out in that they also look towards a key theme of the poet's 'revolutionary mania' - the essential equality of 'the Many' and 'the Few':[109]

> And thou who cleav'st the azure sky,
> Like him [God], with pity shalt look down;
> Shalt view like him, with equal eye
> The shepherd's crook, the Monarch's crown.[110]

In 1791, the image given here would be combined with what has been described as a 'startling footnote' on the 'Rights of Man' in The Laurel of Liberty, to produce the following statement in an Ode celebrating the second anniversary of that other French

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[108] Arno Miscellany, 43.

[109] See Frederick Pilon's Aerostation; or the Templar's Stratagem. A Farce in Two Acts (London, 1784) and Reynolds' Life and Times - in which the terms 'Balloon mania' and 'revolutionary mania' are used - I, 253-5, II, 101.

[110] Arno Miscellany, 10.

'Revolution':[111]

> And had not kind, impartial Heav'n,
> To ev'ry rank an *equal feeling* giv'n?
> Virtue alone should vice *subdue*,
> Nor are the MANY baser than the FEW.[112]

Whether or not it really had been his ambition in 1784, as the Advertisement to the 'Serious Thoughts' claims, Merry was certainly now fully committed to 'deliver[ing] his Sentiments in public debate'.[113]

The particular debate Merry entered in the early 1790s was generated by Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France. The poet had already addressed Burke on the subject of the revolutionary violence in the Laurel of Liberty, which was effectively his answer (both literally and figuratively) to the Reflections:

> And could'st thou wonder, lib'ral BURKE! to see
> Revenge lead on the steps of Liberty,
> ...
> O could'st thou wonder when th'explosion came,
> Which burst the o'ercharg'd culverin of shame,

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[111] 'Though the enemies of the French Revolution despise the idea of the *Rights of Men*, yet they are very strenuous to support the *Rights of Nobility*; it is therefore evident that they suppose *some* men to have Rights, though not *all*! The *few* are entitled to *every thing*, the *many* alas! to *nothing*!', Laurel of Liberty, 11n. See Hargreaves-Mawdsley on this footnote in The English Della Cruscans, 210.

[112] Ode on the fourteenth of July, cited by Hargreaves-Mawdsley, Ibid. 244.

[113] Arno Miscellany, 34. In his article on Merry's affinities with revolutionary radicalism, Adams points out that the poet 'was certainly not obscure as a political writer in 1791', 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 30.

That ev'ry suff'rer starting new to life,
Against his proud oppressor bared the knife,
That palaces were rifled, villains bled,
And many a murd'rous traitor lost his head?[114]

In his Ode for the fourteenth of July, which was advertised along with a new (third) edition of the earlier poem, Merry again looked towards Burke. This was acknowledged in the toasts given at the celebratory dinner for which the Ode had been written. Having drunk to 'The Literary Characters who have vindicated the Rights of Man', the 1500 'Democrates' gathered at the Crown and Anchor Tavern gave 'Thanks to Mr Burke for the Discussion he has provoked'.[115] Reporting on the various newspaper accounts of this 'feast of sedition' in a letter dated the following day, Richard Burke noted that whilst the toasts, which represented the 'premeditated enthusiasm' of the 'revolutionists', were 'sufficiently warm', the event itself had proved 'vapid and lifeless'.[116] The Times, for example, presented Merry as having been 'obliged to sit patiently to hear his MUSE of FIRE...miserably MURDERED' by a Mr Jenkins (although, according to Hargreaves-Mawdsley, the poet had himself attended a 'less sober revolutionary gathering' at the Shakespeare Tavern).[117] Walpole was similarly dismissive of Merry's contribution to the evening in a letter to Lady Ossory of 8 August 1791. Commenting on the riots at Birmingham, he remarked that Dr Priestly 'might have saved his house, had he clapped Mr Merry's Ode on it'. 'That is cold enough to have quenched a volcano, and dull enough to be admired by the French Academy', he explained.[118] Whilst his efforts on behalf of the

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[114] Laurel of Liberty, 32-3.

[115] See the Times for 13, 14 and 15 Jul. 1791.

[116] The Correspondence of Edmund Burke, ed. Thomas W. Copeland, 10 vols. (Cambridge and Chicago, 1958-78), VI, 295-6.

[117] Times, 15 Jul. 1791, 2. The English Della Cruscans, 238.

[118] Letters of Horace Walpole, XV, 33.

'revolutionists' in England were made light of, however, Merry's activities as a prominent member of the 'Society of Friends' formed in Paris in 1792 would bring him under the suspicious gaze of the British Government'.[119]

'Breaking butterflies on wheels'?: critical responses to the 'Della Cruscans'

The obituary notice for Merry printed in the Gentleman's Magazine mentions several of Merry's later productions. However, particular attention is given both to the poems written during his 'long residence at Florence' and to his part in the poetical correspondence published in the World. The introduction to the Baviad provides an account of the former 'folly'. Extracts from Gifford's satire are also used to dismiss the 'general infatuation' inspired by 'Della Crusca' and 'Anna Matilda' as 'amatory...nonsense'.[120] To what the author of the notice refers when he states that Merry was 'an accomplished man' who 'certainly possessed a degree of poetical genius' is, therefore, not entirely clear, since the only trace of genius that his chief source, Gifford, had identified in the poet was an extraordinary capacity for fooling the 'besotted town' into believing him worthy of their 'laurels'.[121] This is how the satirist had mockingly proposed that Merry should be remembered if ever he acquired a 'station in the ranks of fame':

> He taught us first the language to refine,
> To crowd with beauties every sparkling line;
> Old phrases with new meanings to dispense,

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[119] See David V. Erdman, Commerce des Lumières: John Oswald and the British in Paris, 1790-1793 (Columbia, 1986), 234, 242-4, 262,

[120] 'Obituary of remarkable Persons; with Biographical Anecdotes [Robert Merry], Gentleman's Magazine (Mar. 1799), 252-4. See Baviad and Mæviad, vii-xiii.

[121] Quoting the Baviad, Ibid. 7-8.

> Amuse the fancy, and - confound the sense![122]

There is certainly no suggestion in the obituary (as there would be in some later commentaries) that the work produced by Merry in the years after he became absorbed in 'the lamentable disorders of France' (the Revolution) shows any greater clarity or depth than the much-ridiculed 'Della Crusca' poems.[123] On the contrary, whilst 'affectation' is stated to have been his downfall, the manner in which the subject of Merry's commitment to the Revolution is introduced implies that the poet's failure to '[give] permanence to his works' was, ultimately, a consequence of his mind having become 'deeply tainted by the principles upon which that detestable event was founded'. These are shown to have been as 'highly reprehensible' as the 'false glitter, negligence, and obscurity' that marred his writing, failings which - according to 'a very good character' of Merry taken from 'The Ghost of Pope' - were, themselves, the products of 'Gallic' principles:

> Behold La Crusca's Paridel advance,
> From courts or stews, from Florence or from France;
> Before him Swift and Adison retire;
> He brings new prose, new verse, new lyric fire;
> Proves a designer works without design,
> And fathoms Nature with a Gallic line.[124]

It is significant that although the obituary makes use of the satirist's introduction, only after it has commented upon the poet's conversion to Jacobinism does the author actually point out that 'Mr. Merry...has been loudly stigmatized and decried by...William Giffard, in the Baviad and the Mæviad'. This creates the impression that

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[122] See Baviad Mæviad, 20-5 and 85-7.

[123] Adams' argument in 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 29, 33.

[124] The poem referred to here is T. J. Mathias's The Shade of Alexander Pope.

the satires - whilst ostensibly concerned with literary matters - were, first and foremost, a reaction to the (perceived) change in Merry's political opinions, a change that had become very apparent in the period just prior to the Baviad's publication.

The force - and perhaps, timing - of Gifford's attack upon this particular 'victim of the French Revolution' had certainly enabled Walpole to imagine 'the elegant satirist' leading the fight against all those (like Merry) whose 'political opinions...spread misery over private life' and 'endangered the best foundations of society' in the aftermath.[125] Writing to the Reverend Robert Nares on 14 November 1792, Walpole expressed the wish that 'the masterly author of the Baviad would spend some of his shafts on the centurions of the mob'. After all, he explained, Gifford had already succeeded in '[driving] that bombast and unintelligible rhapsodist, Merry, to hide his head in the confusions of Paris' (a remark which recalls the description of the Laurel of Liberty in a footnote to the Baviad).[126] As it turned out, the 'shafts' thrown by Gifford in 1791 were less effective than Walpole imagined. The Baviad can hardly be said to have been the main factor in Merry's decision to go to Paris, in any case, and by the time he returned, in 1793, Government suspicion presented a far more compelling reason to 'hide his head'.[127] Nevertheless, the belief that his first satire had (for a short time at least) effectively rid London of 'Della Crusca' was one which the 'masterly author' himself encouraged in his introduction to the Mæviad, published in 1795:

> ...the good effects of the satire (gloriose loqour) were not long in manifesting themselves. Della Crusca appeared no more in the Oracle, and, if any of his followers ventured to treat the town with a soft sonnet, it was not, as before,

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125 'Obituary', 253.

126 Letters of Horace Walpole, XV, 162. Baviad and Mæviad, 14-16.

127 See Adams, 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 37, Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 262-4, Clayden, Early Life of Samuel Rogers, 273-85, and Mee, An Oxford Companion to The Romantic Age, 600.

> introduced by a pompous preface. Pope and Milton resumed their superiority, and Este and his coadjutors, silently acquiesced in the growing opinion of their incompetency, and shewed some sense of shame.[128]

Following this, in a passage reminiscent of Walpole's letter, Gifford explains that he had been 'called into the lists' once more by 'the reappearance of some of the scattered enemy', a remnant, no doubt, of the thousand 'nameless names' who had overrun 'the kingdom' following the arrival of 'the first cargo of poetry...from Florence' in 1787.[129] The image of the vast and unruly 'Cruscan school' created in the introduction to the Baviad is now recognised as an expression of the same 'class-based, antijacobin fear' that lay behind Walpole's desire to see 'the mob' put down.[130] However, whilst Gifford was happy to accept the credit for having 'done the state some service', as he put it, he seemed anxious that his satires should be seen in none other than a literary context. As though to emphasise this he points out that he had chosen to put the Mæviad aside when war broke out:

> The times seemed unfavourable to such productions. Events of real importance were momentarily claiming the attention of the public, and the still voice of the Muses was not likely to be listened to amidst the din of arms.[131]

The terms used in the Gentleman's Magazine to describe the attack upon Merry, suggest that it was directed at the poet's character as much as his work. However, in an appendix to the Baviad, written in the same month as the obituary, Gifford insisted that its satire had been 'directed against the wretched taste of the followers of

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128 Introduction to the Mæviad, Baviad and Mæviad, 60-1

129 Introduction to the Ibid. x, xiii.

130 Jones' term: Satire and Romanticism, 118.

131 Introduction to the Mæviad, Baviad and Mæviad, 61, 65-6.

the *Cruscan* school, without the slightest reference to their other qualities, moral or physical'.[132] As far as he was concerned this must have been apparent to anyone who had read the early editions of the Baviad.

Someone to whom this does not seem to have been apparent was the author of the poem quoted at the end of the obituary. This was T. J. Mathias, who had readily presented himself as an enemy of the 'lovers of confusion' (both political and poetical) and 'troublers of state' with whom Walpole identified Merry in the earlier Pursuits of Literature. Mathias was later forced to acknowledge that 'the Bavian drops' had, after all, 'fallen off, like oil, from the plumage of the Florence and Cruscan geese'.[133] However, when writing the first of his own satirical dialogues upon the 'democratick writers' and 'witlings and poetasters' of the day, in 1794, he saw reason to thank Gifford for having done some of the work for him:

> The author of The Baviad has taken some pleasant trouble off my hands. The Albums, the Laura-Marias, the Jerninghams, Anthony Pasquins, Mary Robinsons, Piozzis and Bozzis, the "Phillidas, Hypsipilas, vatum et plorabile si quid". Unfortunately there are too many left.[134]

According to Mathias 'Government and Literature' were at that time 'more than ever intimately connected'. His argument in the 'Introductory Letter' to the four dialogues is that 'satirical writing' - far from going unheard - was most needed when the security of both the kingdom's 'political and religious existence' and 'the rights of society' were under threat.[135] Viewed in this way, Gifford's decision to remind his readers of the very events which he claimed to have stepped back from (both through direct

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[132] Baviad and Mæviad, xv.

[133] 'An Introductory Letter to a Friend', The Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues. With notes, 8th edn. (London, 1798), 14, 30.

[134] Dialogue I, Ibid. 47 n.

[135] 'Introductory Letter', Ibid. 5-7.

reference and the use of martial imagery), whilst at the same advising them against complacency regarding the 'Cruscan school', takes on a new significance. Edward Jerningham hinted at just such a connection between Gifford's attack on the 'school' and the political context in which it was launched in the opening section of his 'Lines on "The Baviad": and "The Pursuits of Literature"' (not the only time that the two were linked):

> 'TIS said, that when of late the Gallic Host
> With spreading sails approach'd the Cambrian coast,
> An ardent Welchman - at the sight impress'd -
> Swore, stamp'd, and fum'd; by rage and fear possess'd.
>
> And now each day he haunts the pebbly strand
> The self-appointed guardian of the land:
> Does any vessel his wild vision meet,
> The maniac loud exclaims "*The fleet! The fleet!*"
>
> Thus, like our TAFFY, acts the *Baviad Muse!*
> Who, with fell rage, the Cruscan Tribe pursues;
> Yet to degrade all other Bards he pants,
> Frets, bounces, bullies, rages, rhymes, and rants!
> Does any Poet wound his jealous eyes,
> The maniac "*Crusca, Della Crusca!*" cries.[136]

The threat posed to 'the British Constitution' by 'the tyrannical Republick' of France was certainly the driving force behind The Pursuits of Literature. Whereas Gifford

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[136] Edward Jerningham, Poems (London, 1806), 96-98. Hargreaves-Mawdsley points out that Gifford and Mathias were also 'pilloried' in a poem in The British Critic XI (Jan.-June 1798), 14, see The English Della Cruscans, 295.

claimed to have separated the 'wretched taste' of the Della Cruscans from their 'other qualities', Mathias argued that, in the case of his targets - which were essentially the same as Gifford's - such a distinction was impossible. The direction of his satire is quite clear:

> It was written upon no private motive whatsoever; but simply and solely as the conduct of the persons mentioned or alluded to, or the manner of their compositions, or their principles of their writings, tend to influence and affect the learning, the government, the religion, the publick morality, the publick happiness, and the publick security of this Nation.[137]

It is his intention to conduct his countrymen 'through the labyrinths of literature' in order 'to convince them of the manner in which the understanding and affections are either bewildered, darkened, enervated, or degraded and he will not, he insists, be diverted from his purpose by 'the war-whoop of Jacobins and democratick writers, or by the feeble shrieks of witlings and poetasters'.[138]

There are echoes here of that part of the Introduction to the Baviad where Gifford states that the aim of his own satire had been to 'correct the growing depravity of the public taste, and check the inundation of absurdity that was bursting...from a thousand springs'. He had made the decision to intervene, he explains, when even 'bed-ridden old women, and girls at their samplers began to rave' under the influence of this 'alarming evil'.[139] Gifford's depiction of the poets who were then 'applauded by the fashionable world' as a 'moon-struck tribe' whose collected works might well have been bettered in terms of poetry and rationality by the writing on the 'walls of Bedlam' was, of course, not without precedent.[140] An earlier response to the 'grievous

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[137] 'Introductory Letter' and Preface to Dialogue I, Pursuits of Literature, 5-7, 42

[138] 'Introductory Letter', Ibid. 5, 11.

[139] Baviad and Mæviad, xiv.

[140] Quoting Ibid. 30, 84, 86n.

outcry' that certain 'Poetasters' were 'cried up and read' to the detriment of all others, points out that 'poets and lunatics' have 'always been classed together'.[141] The article which appeared in the European Magazine for December 1786, cited this in support of its proposal for a scheme under which the 'most promising wits' would be 'shut up in whatever prison government...deem[ed] proper' until 'they produce[d] something deserving the regard of posterity'. Gifford's comment in the Mæviad regarding Bedlam - and a reference to 'Merry's Moorfields whine' in the earlier satire - is anticipated here in the assumption that Moorfields (where the Bethlehem Hospital, or Bedlam, was then situated) would be the probable destination for the ode writers among them.[142] However, whilst the satirist's presentation of Della Cruscanism as an 'epidemic malady' affecting the brain may have been in keeping with a long-standing literary tradition, it also had clear political connotations during the period in which he was writing. This is evident from the Gentleman's Magazine obituary, where Gifford's account of the epidemic's progress runs parallel to comments on the 'political contagion' that subsequently claimed Merry, in the next column.[143] That the two 'maladies' were, in fact, one and the same was later highlighted by the American writer Thomas Green Fessenden in the following note to his political satire Democracy Unveiled (1806):

> Madness is frequently mistaken for *inspiration*, and want of *common sense*, is often thought a proof of I know not what *sublime sense*. Thus the ravings of Della Crusca and the moon struck tribe of sonneteers in the same school, have been thought to be the perfection of poetry. Indeed, Della Crusca's poetry and

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141 'A Scheme for the Advancement of Poetical Genius in the Kingdom', European Magazine (Dec. 1786), 404-6.

142 'Moorfields whine' refers to 'a most wretched rhapsody of incomprehensible nonsense' addressed to Mrs Robinson and included in her Poems of 1791, the Baviad and Mæviad, 26&n. 'Rinaldo to Laura Maria', Poems, 100-3.

143 Baviad and Mæviad, xii. 'Obituary', 253.

> Rosseau's politics are different diagnositcs of the same disease, and the poor creatures who are affected with these symptoms are absolutely mad![144]

Fessenden's comments on the beguiling nature of 'Della Crusca's' poetry also recall Mathias's warnings in the Pursuits of Literature regarding the potential danger that lurked beneath 'alluring' poetical descriptions, especially when the writer concerned was said (as Merry was) to possess both 'genius and fancy'. Using imagery similar to that employed by Gifford in both the Baviad and Mæviad, Mathias argues that such works threatened to 'poison the waters of our land in their springs and fountains', thereby introducing 'wounds and disease' into the 'political body'.[145] As he points out in the first of his dialogues, not only were 'girls' heads' turn[ed] wild', by the nonsense which burst from these springs, they were also 'now and then...tainted with democracy'.[146]

It is in his use of such emotive imagery that Gifford betrays an interest in the 'other qualities' of the 'Cruscan' poets. This is most evident in his treatment of Mrs Robinson, one of the 'ingenious ladies' whose 'whining and fretting' was said by Mathias to be responsible for directing young girls' thoughts towards democracy. In the introductory section of the Baviad she is subjected to what Leigh Hunt would later angrily refer to as a 'pleasant and manly fling at [her] "crutches"'. Here Gifford openly attacks his targets on both moral and physical grounds:

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[144] Democracy unveiled, or, tyranny stripped of the garb of patriotism. By Christopher Caustic, L.L.D, 2 vols. (New York, 1806), Vol. I, Canto II, 31 n.

[145] Pursuits of Literature, Dialogue IV, 242. Mathias's comments relate to specifically to Lewis's The Monk. However, his discussion raises issues similar to those which surrounded the Della Cruscans at this time.

[146] Ibid. Mathias refers to the writings of 'Mrs Charlotte Smith, Mrs Inchbald [and] Mrs Robinson', all of whom were in some way associated with the Della Cruscans at one time or another.

See snivelling Jerningham at fifty weep
O'er love love-lorn oxen and deserted sheep;
See Cowley frisk it to one ding-dong chime,
And weekly cuckold her poor spouse in rhyme;
See Thrale's grey widow with a satchel roam,
And bring in pomp her labour'd nothings home;
See Robinson forget her state, and move
On crutches tow'rds the grave, to 'Light o' Love';
See Parsons, while all sound advice he scorns'
Mistake too soft excrescences for horns;
And butting all he meets, with aukward pains'
Lay bare his forehead and expose his brains. [my italics][147]

Mrs Robinson's rheumatic joints mirror the 'rheumatic brains' of those suffering from 'metromania', the name given in the Baviad to the 'infection' which 'Della Crusca' had supposedly introduced into the native springs whilst still in Florence.[148] Gifford claimed to have been concerned primarily with 'damming up' the current of nonsense printed in the World and, subsequently, the Oracle. However, as far as the 'exotics' whose 'specious brilliancy' had caused the initial 'inundation' were concerned, these particular 'springs' had already begun to flow 'more sparingly' sometime before the Baviad appeared.[149] This raises the question as to why he should have chosen to step forward in 1791, rather than simply leaving their 'absurdities' to '[die] of inanition' as Hunt believed likely.[150] The answer must lie in the fact that it was at this time that the streams of folly' - hitherto harmless - began to merge publicly with the

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147 Baviad and Mæviad, 10-12. The Feast of the Poets, with Notes, and Other Pieces in Verse (London, 1814), facsimile edn. (Oxford, 1989), 60 n.

148 Baviad and Mæviad, 44, 49.

149 Ibid. ix-x, xiv.

150 Ibid. 62. ALH, II, 88-9.

'flow of faction', as Merry - applauded by Mrs Robinson - appeared from behind the 'Della Cruscan' mask as both a 'Jacobin' and a 'democratick writer'.[151] This is certainly the view that Hazlitt took in his Table Talk essay 'On Criticism'. Joining Hunt in condemning the 'fling' at Mrs Robinson, he cites both the Baviad and Mæviad as examples of what he termed 'political criticism':

> The eminent professors in this grovelling department are at first merely out of sorts with themselves, and vent their spleen in little interjections and contortions of phrase: - cry *Pish* at a lucky hit, and *Hem* at a fault, are smart on personal defects, and sneer at 'Beauty out of favour and on crutches' - ...rifle the flowers of the Della Cruscan school, and give you in their stead, as models of a pleasing pastoral style, Verses upon Anna - which you may see in the notes to the Baviad and Mæviad...They not only *damn* the work in the lump, but villify and traduce the author, and substitute lying abuse and sheer malignity for sense and satire. To have written a popular work is as much as a man's character is worth, and sometimes his life, if he does not happen to be on the right side of the question. ...It is not a question of literary discussion, but of political proscription. It is a mark of loyalty and patriotism to extend no quarter to those of the opposite party.[152]

For Hazlitt, politics and poetry are inseparable. His remarks call to mind one section of the Baviad in particular. When Gifford made the statement denying having been motivated by anything other than the poetical 'qualities' of his targets, he argued that this would have been clear to his early readers. What would also have been clear is the fact that a great deal of space is given over in the Baviad to ridiculing the Laurel of Liberty; this was a poem that fell outside the scope of Gifford's satire as he defined

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[151] The term 'flow of faction' used in reference to the Crown and Anchor meeting for which Merry provided a celebratory ode, in the Times (14 Jul. 1791), 2.

[152] Howe, VIII, 220-1.

it in his response to Parsons' challenge and in which the author was not, in Gifford's view, 'on the right side of the question' . In the Preface to that poem, Merry had likened the 'progress of opinion' sweeping throughout Europe to 'a rapid stream, [which] though it may be checked, cannot be controuled'. This was, of course, the very image that Gifford would use to describe the 'rise and progress' of the 'Cruscan school'.[153]

Gifford's typically mis-representative account of this 'popular work' (it was, according to his notes, known to all who could read at that time) begins in retrospect with an image of 'Della Crusca' at work on his new poem. As befitted his status of both 'madman' and poet desirous of producing 'something deserving the regard of posterity', Merry is shown working in confinement:

> Lo, DELLA CRUSCA! In his closet pent,
> He toils to give the crude conception vent.
> Abortive thoughts that right and wrong confound,
> Truth sacrificed to letters, sense to sound,
> False glare, incongruous images combine;
> And noise and nonsense clatter through the line.[154]

Confusion and incongruity were the features which Walpole had also picked out when describing the Laurel of Liberty in letters to Mary Berry and Edward Jerningham, making a connection similar to that implied in the Gentleman's Magazine obituary, between the disorder inherent in Merry's poetic style and the political 'disorders' which followed in the wake of the French Revolution:

> Della Crusca has published a poem...which, like the 'Enrages', has confounded and overturned all ideas. There are *gossamery tears* and *silky oceans* - the

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153 Laurel of Liberty, v-vi. See Baviad and Mæviad, xi n, xv.

154 Ibid. 14-16&n. 'A Scheme for the Advancement of Poetical Genius', 404-6.

> first time, to be sure, that anybody ever *cried cobwebs*, or that the *sea* was made of *paduasay*.[155]

> I have been reading at the Antipodes too [of Burke's Reflections]...and there I found *cobweb tears* and *lustreing oceans* - new productions - if not of nature, at least of art, and I suppose to be had at the new Birmingham warehouse of the original maker.[156]

The refusal to 'admit that a Whig author knows anything of common sense or English' is one more characteristic of the political critic as defined by Hazlitt and underlined by associating Della Cruscan vocabulary with the Birmingham laboratory of the radical scientist Joseph Priestly. By drawing attention to the faults in the poet's style, Gifford was attempting to counter that political subterfuge by which 'Della Crusca's' work had come to be regarded as 'the very perfection of poetry'. For example, a list of some of the most 'stagger[ing]' instances of his 'exquisite nonsense' in the footnote to this section of the Baviad represents Gifford's refusal to either countenance, or even acknowledge the change in direction that the Laurel of Liberty is now seen to represent. At a time when Merry was building a reputation as a political writer in his own name it was the dandy face of the 'lisping' and 'affected' 'ensign' of the World that Gifford put forward for posterity by way of ridiculing the poet's contribution to the 'ferment of revolutionary ideas'.[157] 'This is clearly illustrated by the following account of an imaginary reading at Mrs Piozzi's:

> The Bard steps forth, in birth-day splendour drest,
> His right hand graceful waving o'er his brest;
> His left extending so that all may see,

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155 To Mary Berry, 8-11 Nov. 1790, Yale Edition, XI, 136.

156 To Edward Jerningham, 10 Nov. 1790, Ibid. XLII, 303-4 & n.

157 See Adams on this subject in 'Robert Merry, Political Romanticist', 25, 30, 37.

A roll inscrib'd 'The Wreath of Liberty'.
So forth he steps, and with complacent air,
Bows round the circle, and assumes the chair;
With lemonade he gargles next his throat,
Then sweetly preludes to the liquid note:
And now 'tis silence all. 'GENIUS OR MUSE -'
Thus while the flow'ry subject he pursues,
A wild delirium round th'assembly flies;
Unusual lustre shoots from Emma's eyes;
Luxurious Arno drivels as he stands;
And Anna frisks, and Laura claps her hands.

Having read this, one might be forgiven for thinking that the 'roll' was inscribed with nothing more significant than another of the 'amatory epistle[s] fraught with lightening and thunder' for which 'Della Crusca' and his 'prurient' audience were well known, rather than the poem in which Merry declared his commitment to a 'nobler theme'.[158]

An early indication of the effectiveness of what is now recognised as Gifford's 'brilliant ideological work' in extinguishing the achievements of Merry and his followers within 'the 'Cruscan school', is the fact that he soon came to be regarded as a critic who had broken 'butterflies upon wheels'.[159] Those who have written of the Della Cruscans in these terms are considered to have 'missed the point' by overlooking the political context to the satires.[160] However, in one sense this idea of the poets as beautiful and harmless 'butterflies' undermined the satirist's attempts to present them as being in some way dangerous, leaving the way open for them to continue as

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158 Baviad and Mæviad, 17-19. The Laurel of Liberty, 9.

159 Quoting Gifford's Introduction to the Mæviad, Baviad and Mæviad, 67-8, and McCalman's Introduction to An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age, 2.

160 Hargreaves-Mawdsley's argument: The English Della Cruscans, 243.

'object[s] of universal envy and admiration'.[161] An illustration of this is the article on the third and fourth volumes of the Poetry of the World, in the Monthly Review for September 1791:

> Newspapers, considered as poetical repositories, may be compared to pleasure-gardens badly kept; where more nettles appear than roses, and where a beautiful flower often loses the admiration to which it is entitled, in consequence of its being obscured by surrounding weeds. ...The editors and proprietors, therefore, of the public prints, are obliged to the managers of the daily paper called 'THE WORLD' for the exertions which they have made to rescue newspaper poetry from disgrace, by inviting some acknowledged favourites of the Muses to decorate their pages. The value of the assistance procured, this continued selection may serve, with the former volumes, to ascertain. It contains several elegant poetic trifles. Coming, however, from different authors, in different situations and spirits, they do not merit an equal portion of commendation: but when the reader is informed that 'this collection boasts of the aid of Mr Sheridan, Mr Merry, Mrs Cowley, Mr Andrews, Mr Jerningham, Mr Colman, Mrs Robinson, Captain Broome, Captain Topham, with other names no less respected, though they may not be known', they may reasonably expect some entertainment. Minutely to criticise would carry us to a greater length than our other duties to the public will allow, beside, were we to undertake it, we might be ridiculed for *breaking butterflies on the Wheel.*[162]

Here the leading figures of the 'Cruscan school' are set apart from the generality of newspaper poets by virtue of their superior merit. However, later critics failed to see a distinction and the image of the 'butterflies on the wheel' came to symbolise the

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[161] Introduction to the Mæviad, Baviad and Mæviad, 68.

[162] 'The Poetry of the World. Vol. III. and IV.', Monthly Review (Sept. 1791), 21-2.

'unresisting imbecility' which Gifford sought to emphasise in his introduction to the Mæviad, turning the criticism levelled at him to his own advantage. Whilst Hunt and Hazlitt attacked the satirist for 'political proscription' of the 'poor Della Cruscans', they joined in with the general consensus that these poets merited a degree of censure, their taste being, as Hunt remarked in his Autobiography 'as bad as can be imagined'.[163] As the following Chapters will show, this was due, in part, to the fact that they had their own reasons for wishing to distance themselves from Merry and the 'Cruscan school'.

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[163] ALH, II, 88.

CHAPTER II

'POETS,...AND PAINTERS, WORTHY TO BE FRIENDS OF THEIRS': BENJAMIN WEST AND THE ORIGIN OF HUNT'S LOVE OF ITALY

'Social Genealogy'

In an essay published in the Indicator for 17 November 1819, Leigh Hunt invited his readers to 'accompany him' in the 'curious and pleasant' consideration 'that a link of personal acquaintance [could] be traced up from the authors of [their] own times to those of Shakespeare, and to Shakespeare himself':

> Ovid, in recording with fondness his intimacy with Propertius and Horace, regrets that he had only seen Virgil. But still he thinks the sight of him worth remembering. And Pope, when a child, prevailed on him some friends to take him to a coffee-house which Dryden frequented, merely to look at him; which he did, to his great satisfaction. Now such of us as have shaken hands with a living poet, might be able perhaps to reckon up a series of connecting shakes to the very hand that wrote of Hamlet, and of Falstaff and of Desdemona.[1]

In 'reckon[ing] up' this 'intellectual pedigree', he began with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, known to Thomas Moore, and 'mentioned in Boswell as being admitted to the celebrated club, of which Johnson, Goldsmith and others were members':

> Johnson...was the friend of Savage, who knew Steele, who knew Pope. Pope was intimate with Congreve, and Congreve with Dryden. Dryden is

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[1] 'Social Genealogy', and 'The Indicator. No. I' (13 Oct. 1819), quoted from: Selected Writings of Leigh Hunt, eds Robert Morrison and Michael Eberle-Sinatra, 6 vols. (London, 2003), II, 225, 227-8.

> said to have visited Milton. Milton is said to have known Davenant;...but if the link between Dryden and Milton, and Milton and Davenant is somewhat apocryphal...it may be carried at once from Dryden to Davenant, with whom he was unquestionably intimate. Davenant then knew Hobbes, who knew Bacon, who knew Ben Jonson, who was intimate with...perhaps all the great men of Elizabeth's and James's time...Thus we have a link of 'beamy hands' from our own times up to Shakespeare.[2]

A prominent figure in the circles (both literary and political) into which Robert Merry had entered upon his return to England in 1788, Sheridan also features in the 'line of continuity' highlighted by Edward Bostetter in his article on the 'Original Della Cruscans'. There, this 'friendly genealogy', as Hunt termed it, is cited in support of the theory that he, and those 'living poets' with whom he had 'shaken hands' (principally, Byron, Shelley and Keats), may have 'all had a chance to see' the Florence Miscellany.[3] As we know, this volume was printed in Florence, and distributed among the friends of its authors, during the latter part of 1785 (just one year after Hunt's birth), the 'stock' having apparently been 'exhausted' by the following May.[4] Extracts did, of course, appear in a number of London periodicals over the next four years, chiefly, in the European and Gentleman's magazines. However, the collection as a whole remained unpublished. Whilst William Parsons' contributions were included in both his Poetical Tour of 1787, and - in their entirety - in the later Travelling Recreations (1807), these volumes appear to have received little attention outwith the sphere of his own acquaintance.[5] Nevertheless, if Hunt had indeed met

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[2] 'Social Genealogy', 227-8.

[3] Bostetter points out that Hunt was himself acquainted with Bell, Kemble, Mrs Siddons, 'The Original Della Cruscans', 299-300.

[4] Merry's response to Mrs Piozzi's request for more copies (29 May 1786) quoted from 'Robert Merry - A Pre-Byronic Hero', 79.

[5] See The English Della Cruscans, 151-2, 298.

with the work of the so-called 'Original Della Cruscans' (as opposed to the 'plague of...butterflies' noticed in the Feast of the Poets) he would have found, in Parsons' 'imitations' of Ariosto, and in the many references to the 'matchless work[s]' of the 'fam'd Tribuna', reminders of 'some of [the] most delightful holidays' of his 'boyhood', spent at the home of his great uncle, the American artist Benjamin West.[6] The artist's house, situated in Newman Street, 'at the west end of the town', was one of 'two principal...paradise[s]' into which Hunt would retreat when 'not within school-bounds'; the world seeming 'shut out...the moment the street door was closed, and [he] began stepping down [the] long carpeted aisles of pictures, with statues in the angles where they turned'.[7] It represents one of those 'haunts of...recreation free from all noise and wrangling' which he had endeavoured to recreate in the Indicator itself, using 'his pen...to betake himself...into the nests and bowers of more lasting speculations' when he had done 'agitat[ing] his spirits...with public ones'.[8]

As we saw in the previous chapter, Mrs Piozzi had herself found a haven from the immediate 'grievances' of the Tuscans in the galleries at Florence, preferring to talk of these than of 'their government'. Describing the statues of the Uffizi, in her Observations and Reflections (which Hunt certainly had looked into by the time he moved to Florence in 1823), she remarked that 'you really...do not seem as if you were alone in this tribune, so animated is every figure, so full of life and soul'.[9] Hunt

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[6] See Parsons's 'Epistle to...Pindemonte', Florence Miscellany, 28, Hunt's 'A Nearer View of Some of the Shops', The Indicator, and the Companion; A Miscellany for the Fields and the Fire-Side, 2 vols. (London, 1834), I, 319, and Feast of the Poets, 8.

[7] See ALH, I, 147, 154, 158. The second house was that of 'Mr Godfrey Thornton... in Austin Friars'.

[8] The Indicator. No. I', 224-5.

[9] Observations and Reflections, I, 296, 301-3. Hunt cites Mrs Piozzi's comments on the 'expedition' to Vallombrosa in his notes to Bacchus in Tuscany, A Dithyrambic Poem, from the Italian of Francesco Redi, with Notes Original and Select (London, 1825), 144-5.

would make a similar observation regarding 'the sort of presence in sculpture' in another of his essays for the Indicator, dated 7 June 1820. His comments upon the instinctive behaviour of people on entering 'a place with busts and statues in it' followed an account of the kind of showroom attached to those shops - 'such as Papera's in Marylebone-street' and 'Shout in Holborn' - which sold casts of some of the figures that Mrs Piozzi and her associates had mentioned in their verses (Venus, Apollo, the 'Dancing Faun'). This, in turn, led him on to the subject of the gallery behind West's house, home to a copy of the 'famous' statue (Venus de Medicis) before which William Parsons had often found himself 'Grown to the spot...Pygmalion-like':

> ...it was the statues that impressed us, still more than the pictures. It seemed as if Venus and Apollo waited our turning at the corners; and there they were, - always the same, placid and intuitive, more human and than the paintings, yet too divine to be over-real.[10]

It was to 'that house', Hunt recalled, 'with the gallery in question, and the little green plot of ground, surrounded with an arcade and busts' that he owed the 'greatest part' of his own 'love for what is Italian and belongs to the fine arts'. As he would point out in a further essay, published the following week, it was there too that he had grown to love Ariosto, a poet whom Mrs Piozzi had ranked alongside Shakespeare as one of the 'heroes of modern literature', and whose songs of 'beauteous Dames and burnish'd Knights' had helped Parsons 'beguile the fleeting night' after his visits to the 'lov'd' Tribuna.[11] Alluding to a pair of decorated fire screens that had stood in Mrs West's parlour (a 'good-sized room', adorned 'with engravings and prints', and with one of two windows opening out on the 'Italian look[ing] garden') Hunt recalled

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[10] 'A Nearer View of Some of the Shops', 317-20, and Parsons' 'Epistle to... Pindemonte', Florence Miscellany, 30.

[11] Observations and Reflections, I, 245, and Parsons, 'Epistle to...Pindemonte', Florence Miscellany, 30.

that, long before he knew anything of the author of the Orlando Furioso, he had been 'as familiar as young playmates with the beautiful Angelica and Medoro'.[12] Presented by his biographer, John Galt, as the Shakespeare of the art world, West figures in many of the 'numerous side-branches or common friendships' that lead from Hunt to the Della Cruscans, and so on 'up' to the great poet himself. A number of these may be traced back to Italy, where the artist had spent three years (1760-3) studying in some of 'the most celebrated repositories of art' - the Uffizi among them - before taking the decision to settle in England.[13]

Recording her Observations and Reflections, soon after her arrival at Milan, on 4 November 1784, Mrs Piozzi remarked that 'the candid inhabitants of Italian states' give 'much honour' to the British, 'who, as they say, *viaggiono con profitto*', and 'scarce ever fail to carry home with them from other nations, everything which can benefit or adorn their own'. As her comments just prior to leaving Florence on 12 September 1785 indicate, she would herself benefit from her time in that 'headquarters of painting, sculpture, and architecture' where 'not a step [could] be taken without a new or a revived idea being added to [one's] store'.[14] It was the desire to enrich his own 'store' that had led West to that 'fountain-head of the arts' some twenty-four years previously. He too would share the 'profits' of his travels, producing copies of some of Italy's 'great master-pieces' in return for the assistance afforded him by men such as William Allen, Chief Justice of Philadelphia.[15] Accompanied by Allen's son and nephew, Joseph Shippen, West sailed from Philadelphia on 12 April 1760. By the end of June, they were at Leghorn, partaking in the 'general great hospitality' of the merchants George Jackson and Robert

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[12] 'Sale of the Late Mr. West's Pictures', Indicator (14 Jun. 1820), 286, and ALH, I, 151.

[13] 'Social Genealogy', 221-2. John Galt, The Life Works of Benjamin West, 2 vols. (London & Edinburgh, 1816-20), I, 131, II, 203-4.

[14] Observations and Reflections, I, 67-8, 326, 331-2.

[15] See Galt, I, 70, 75-6, 84, and Ingamells' Dictionary, 990-1.

Rutherford, with whom Allen had business.[16] West's sights were set on Rome, however, for, as he would point out in a letter of instruction to one of his students, written some twenty-seven years later, 'that City[,] being the great repository of painting and sculpture[, had] ever been the favorite place' to which 'men of eminence in those professions' had resorted.[17] This is borne out by Galt's account of the society into which the young West entered following his arrival at Rome on 10 July, his journey from Leghorn having continued in the company of 'a French Courier...who had occasion to pass that way'. Its 'chief attractions', the biographer explained, were not 'the native inhabitants, ...but the number of accomplished strangers of all countries and religions, who, in constant succession, came in pilgrimage to the shrine of antiquity; and who, by the contemplation of the merits and glories of departed worth, often felt themselves ...miraculously endowed with new qualities'.[18]

Among the many 'accomplished strangers' whose acquaintance West made during what turned out to be the first in a number of brief visits to Rome, was the German artist Anton Raphael Mengs. Described by Galt as being at the 'zenith of his popularity', Mengs was then at work on a ceiling for Cardinal Albani, one of the 'several...distinguished characters' to whom the young artist had been given letters of introduction (the Villa Albani, incidentally, was one of the places visited by the Piozzis in 1786).[19] Having been asked to provide a sample of his work, West undertook the portrait of his friend and guide, Thomas Robinson (later, Lord Grantham), whom he had met upon his arrival. The portrait was subsequently exhibited, anonymously, at one of the assemblies held by the renowned connoisseur

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[16] Galt, I, 91.

[17] For the letter to Johann Heinrich Ramberg (c.1787-88) see Franziska Forster-Hahn's 'The Sources of True Taste, Benjamin West's Instructions to a Young Painter for his Studies in Italy', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 30 (1967), 367-82.

[18] Galt, I, 91, 97, 101

[19] Ibid. I, 91, and Observations and Reflections, II, 125-6.

Daniel Crespin (or, in Galt, Crespigné), where it was apparently acknowledged 'to be second (only) in the executive department...to the first painter then in Rome'. Indeed, a number of those present had thought it to be the work of Mengs himself.[20] According to Galt, it was after having seen this evidence of the 'mechanical part' of West's art, that the latter issued him with the following advice upon the course of study that he should take in order to derive the maximum benefit from the remainder of his time in Italy:

> ...what I would...recommend to you, is to see and examine every thing deserving of your attention here, and after making a few drawings of about half a dozen of the best statues, go to Florence, and observe what has been done for Art in the collections there. Then proceed to Bologna, and study the works of the Caracci; afterwards visit Parma, and examine, attentively, the pictures of Correggio; and then go to Venice and view the productions of Tintoretto, Titian and Paul Veronese. When you have made this tour, come back to Rome, and paint an historical composition to be exhibited to the Roman public.[21]

This 'judicious advice, was apparently welcomed by the young artist as a validation of his own 'reflections and principles'. These had tended to steer him away from the 'absurd academical dogmas', then prevalent in the Roman schools, 'which would confine genius to the looking only to the works of art, for that perfection which they but dimly reflect from Nature'. He therefore resolved to follow Mengs's instructions 'with care and attention'. His progress in this respect was to be hampered, however, by a decline in health, which Galt attributed to 'the 'incessant stimulus' which the many 'extraordinary and interesting objects' at Rome had exerted upon 'his feelings

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[20] See the account of the discussion between the artists Nathanial Dance and Thomas Jenkins in Galt, I, 118-121, and Ingamells' Dictionary, 990.

[21] Ibid. I, 122-3

and imagination'. By 20 August, these had 'so affected his mind...that sleep deserted his pillow, and he became ill and constantly feverish', finding it necessary to seek respite in Leghorn, under the care of Rutherford and the British consul, John Dick.[22]

It was whilst West was resting at Leghorn for a second time, during the following summer (*c.* July - November 1761), that the decision was taken to send him to Florence. There he would receive treatment for an abscess on his ankle, from the 'eminent surgeon' Angelo Nannoni, the final operation taking place at the beginning of February 1762.[23] Fortunately for the artist, this was the first stage on the tour outlined by Mengs. It was also here that a number of the handshakes in the series connecting Hunt to the Della Cruscans took place, not least of which was that between West and Sir Horace Mann (the source of much of Horace Walpole's information regarding the '*Quadruple Alliance*' of 1785).[24] As has been pointed out, Mann's standing as a 'diplomatic official and purchasing agent for English collectors', placed him at the centre of a valuable '"network"' of 'mutual assistance'.[25] His generosity in extending 'open house' to all British travellers who had occasion to visit the city is well documented.[26] This would explain why, upon being lent a copy of the Florence Miscellany, Walpole should have been made to feel 'very indignant':

> Though that constellation of *ignes fatui* have flattered one another as if they were real stars, I turned over the whole set of verses....and could not find the only name I expected to see—yours [Mann's]. What stocks and

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22 Galt, I, 113, 123.

23 Ibid. I, 113, 123-5, and Ingamells' Dictionary, 991.

24 Quoting: 'Social Genealogy', 221, and Walpole's letter to Mann of 28 Mar. 1786, Yale Edition, XXV, 635.

25 See Ann Uhry Abrams's account of the 'Italo-British network' in The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting (Washington, D.C., 1985), 81.

26 A sample of the many tributes to Mann's hospitality may be found in both Ingamells' Dictionary, 635-6 and the DNB, XXXVI (2004), 441-2.

> stones!—who lived under the shade of your virtues, and could drink of the stream of your humanity, benevolence, and attentions, and not attempt to pay one line of gratitude. If you send me the book I think I will burn out all but the preface'.[27]

Mann's 'benevolence, and attentions' were of great service to West during the long months in which he remained confined, 'in a most deplorable Condition', to lodgings situated 'over against the Palazzo Pitti'.[28] Although 'a state of pain...is adverse to mental improvement', Galt states, 'there were intervals in which [he] felt his anguish abate'. Then, he was able to 'participate in the conversation of the gentleman to whose kindness he had been recommended' and of those whom he [Mann] introduced. Among the latter was a 'Lord Cooper'.[29] This was, of course, the third Earl Cowper, with whose wife Robert Merry would become involved in 1784, and whose shadow was to extend over the World in the shape of a posthumous libel action brought against Topham and his associates at the beginning of 1790.[30]

Another link (of greater significance for Hunt), was West's acquaintance with the Swiss artist Angelica Kauffman, who arrived in Florence in 1762. According to the notes of Joseph Farington, it was there that the two artists met (presumably whilst studying at the Uffizi), West recommending Kauffman to 'many commissions'.[31]

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[27] 16 Mar. 1786, Letters of Horace Walpole, XIII, 371. As Hargreaves-Mawdsley's comments on the hostility towards them shows, the group had less reason to be grateful than Walpole's letter would suggest, The English Della Cruscans, 131.

[28] West's letter to Shippen of 11 May 1762 quoted from Ingamells' Dictionary, 991.

[29] Galt, I, 125. Unfortunately, there seems to be no obvious reference to West in the published correspondence of Mann.

[30] See Werkmeister on the action, which was eventually dismissed on the grounds that the laws of libel did not apply to the deceased, in The London Daily Press, 7, 202, 209, 213-4, 424-5.

[31] See The Farington Diary, ed. James Greig, 8 vols. (London, 1922-8), I, 189.

Their paths would also cross at Rome, where the Piozzis appear to have visited Kauffman some twenty-three years later (*c.* March-April 1786). 'Besides her paintings', Mrs Piozzi then noted, 'her conversation attracts all people of taste to her house, which none can bear to leave without difficulty and regret'.[32] A further 'side branch' involved Mrs Piozzi's associate William Parsons, who, along with Kauffman, was elected to the Arcadian Society of Rome in 1786, declaring his membership on the title-page of his Poetical Tour (1787).[33] The poet would subsequently refer to his election as one 'easily obtained at the moderate expense of a sequin, with the title deeds of an estate in ARCADIA into the bargain'.[34] This is borne out by Hunt's own remarks upon the Arcadians both in an article on the 'Proposed Royal Academy of Literature', published in the Examiner for 5 August 1821, and in the following note from The Book of Beginnings (1823):

> They numbered some...good poets among them Guidi, Filicacia, &c., but like all other societies, in which genius is to be patronized by the great degenerated into a mere set of courtiers and tattling pretenders, worthy of the contempt with which Goldsmith treats them in his essay on the State of Literature. *I believe any body can be a member now, who writes a sonnet and is orthodox* [my italics].[35]

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[32] Observations and Reflections, II, 141.

[33] See Lady Victoria Manners and Dr G. C. Williamson, Angelica Kauffmann R. A. Her Life and Works (London, 1924), 71-2 and Hargreaves-Mawdsley, The English Della Cruscans, 7-8.

[34] Parson's Travelling Recreations (1807) cited by Hargreaves-Mawdsley, Ibid. 8.

[35] Liberal, II, No. III (April 1823), 135. The Examiner article, in which Hunt accuses Academies of having done nothing for Italy besides 'write criticism, prevent painting and poetry, and set hundreds of affected gentleman upon taking Greek names and calling themselves "Arcadians"', found in the Selected Writings, II, 345-8.

Hunt refers to a passage concerning the so-called 'modern Arcadians' in Oliver Goldsmith's Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe (originally published in 1759). As the editor of Goldsmith's works suggests, the term 'modern Arcadians' appears to be derived from the title of 'an Heroic Pastoral' noticed in the Monthly Review for March 1758.[36] There the 'academy', formed towards the end of the seventeenth century by the 'learned persons...about Queen Christina of Sweden', was described as having a 'Democratic' constitution, admitting 'all sciences, all arts, all nations, all ranks, and both sexes'. Its 'stated assemblies' were held, 'in a most agreeable garden, called *Bosco Parrhasia* ', on 'seven different days' between 1 May and 7 October, the first six being given over to 'the works of the Roman Shepherds', the seventh, to the 'productions of strangers'. The author of the pastoral (M. de la Baume Desdossat) is said to have supposed 'this illustrious body' to be 'the glory of Italy'.[37] For Goldsmith, however, their 'innocent *divertimenti*' amounted to little more than 'frippery'.[38]

In contemplating the 'frippery' of the Arcadians, Goldsmith conjured up the image of 'a shepherdess of threescore...listening to the pastoral tale of a French abbé' whilst 'reclined on a paste-board rock'.[39] This brings to mind the opening passages of the Baviad in which Gifford mocked 'the full-grown children of this piping age' [the Della Cruscans], 'snivelling...at fifty.../O'er love-lorn oxen and deserted sheep'.[40] Joseph Forsyth would in fact draw a comparison between the 'jargon' of the Arcadian Fantoni ('better known by the name Labindo') and that of the 'English Cruscans' in his

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[36] Quoted from: The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, ed. Arthur Friedman, 5 vols. (Oxford, 1966), I, 277n.

[37] 'L'Arcadie Moderne, ou Les Bergeries Savantes, Pastorale Héroique...Par M. de la Baume Desdossat...de l'Académie des Arcades de Rome', Monthly Review (Mar. 1758), 249-51.

[38] Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning, 277.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Baviad and Mæviad, 10.

Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters (1813).[41] Prior to this, the artist John Hoppner (to whom Gifford's satire was subsequently inscribed with the 'Affectionate Regard' of a 'Sincere Friend') had accused 'the silly poetry of Della Crusca[n] and the works of Angelica [Kauffmann] in painting' of having 'captivated the publick so as to corrupt the taste'.[42] Hunt would himself describe the work of 'Angelica' as being of a 'feeble and fluttering' nature when commenting on the 'Past and Present State of the Arts in England' for the Reflector, the implication being that hers was indicative of the 'flippant, monotonous, and affected style' which had 'latterly obtained in Italy', reducing 'that mighty mistress of art to second childishness'.[43] The terms used here anticipate a passage in Hunt's 'Retrospect of the Theatre', in which he noted that 'Mr Dimond, the sole surviving butterfly of the Della Cruscans' had 'given...his usual flutterings among the flowers in piece called the *Secrets of a Palace*'.[44] This in turn looks ahead to his description of the 'Cruscas and Lauras' as a 'plague of...butterflies' in the Feast of the Poets, a version of which appeared in the fourth (and final) number of the Reflector.[45] Whilst Hunt dismissed Kauffman's 'heroes' as 'so many men-milliners in helmets', however, he found her women to have a 'pleasing and feminine softness'.[46] This is reflected in his estimation of the fire screens in the Wests' parlour which had inspired in him that love of Ariosto that shared he with William Parsons. 'Angelica's intent eyes, I thought, had the best of it', Hunt recalled. 'I got Hoole's translation [of Ariosto], but could make nothing of it...Kauffmann seemed to...have done much more for her namesake...[and] could see farther into a pair of eyes than

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41 Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters During an Excursion in Italy in the Years 1802 and 1803, 2nd edn. (London, 1816), 21-2.

42 See Farington's account, dated 25 Nov. 1793, of a conversation with Hoppner, Smirke and Batty, Farington Diary, I, 19.

43 Reflector, I, No. I, 214-6.

44 Ibid. 232.

45 Feast of the Poets quoted from the 1814 edition, 8.

46 'State of the Arts in England', 215-6.

Mr Hoole with his spectacles'.[47]

Whilst the prints on the screens were known to be 'from Angelica Kauffmann', Hunt was 'not sure that Mr West himself was not the designer'.[48] Certainly, the artist had chosen 'Angelica and Medoro' as the theme for one of a number of paintings which (in accordance with Mengs' advice) he began upon his return to Rome in 1763. Indeed, it has been suggested that this, the first of several paintings of the subject by West, may have been intended as a compliment to Kauffman.[49] West had proceeded with the tour recommended by Mengs towards the end of August 1762, travelling in the company of James Matthews, a former executive in the firm of Rutherford and Jackson. The final stage had taken them to Venice, where the artist had made the acquaintance of Richard Dalton, Librarian to George III. Dalton, who was then engaged in making purchases for the royal collection, had apparently commissioned a 'small composition'.[50] The result was a representation of Boccaccio's 'Cimon and Iphigenia' (Decameron, V.1) which, together with that of 'Angelica and Medoro', constituted the 'Thesis' which the artist subsequently presented at Rome. According to Galt, 'the applause which [these paintings] received justified the opinion which Mengs had so early expressed of [West's] talent', furthering his determination to 'cultivate in his native country that profession in which he had already acquired so much celebrity'.[51] It was at this point, the biographer states, that the artist received a letter from his father urging him to take advantage of the opportunity to visit England which the recent peace afforded. Accompanied by the Scottish painter, William Patoun, West duly set out from Rome in May 1763 , returning first to Florence and,

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[47] ALH, I, 151-2.

[48] Ibid. I, 151.

[49] See Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, The Paintings of Benjamin West (New Haven and London, 1986), 262-3.

[50] For Dalton and the commission, see Ingamells' Dictionary, 991, and The Paintings of Benjamin West, 264-6.

[51] 'Thesis': Galt's term, I, 142.

subsequently, Leghorn where he spent three days 'bidding farewell to his friends and supervising the packing and dispatch of his copies to Philadelphia'.[52] From there he proceeded to Parma, Genoa, Turin, and, eventually, Paris, reaching England on 20 August. As we shall see, despite initial appearances to the contrary, his arrival anticipated what has been described as 'an important turning-point in the history of British art'.[53]

'A companion for Kings and Emperors'

Speaking at the Royal Academy in November 1824, Sir Thomas Lawrence observed that (with the few exceptions which the claims of the beautiful and the eminent permitted to the pencil of S[i]r Joshua [Reynolds]'), when West set about establishing his reputation in England, historical painting had been at its 'lowest ebb'.[54] Galt had made a similar point some four years earlier, extending his remarks to the 'state of the arts' in general. 'A few eminent literary characters were sensible of their importance, and lamented the neglect to which they were consigned', he explained, 'but the great body of the intelligent part of the nation neither felt their influence, nor were aware of their importance to the commerce and renown of the kingdom'.[55] By way of illustrating this lack of appreciation, the biographer pointed to the example of the two pictures that West (by then a Director of the Incorporated Society of Artists) had entered into the Spring Gardens exhibition of 1766. According to Galt, of the works

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[52] Ingamells' Dictionary, 991-2.

[53] Quoting Wendy Wasssing Roworth, 'Kauffman and the Art of Painting in England', Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England, ed. Wendy Wassing Roworth (London, 1992), 38.

[54] Lawrence's prize-giving address quoted from: 'The Late Mr West', Times (16 Nov. 1824), 2.

[55] Galt, II, 3.

produced by the artist during his 'early career', it was the representations of 'Pylades and Orestes' and 'The Continence of Scipio' that had attracted the 'greatest share of attention'. 'Statesmen and princes' sent for them', he explained, 'and the artist's house was 'daily thronged with the opulent and the curious'. However, 'no one ever enquired the price; and his imagination, which had been elevated in Italy to emulate the conceptions of those celebrated men who have given a second existence to the great events of religion, history, and poetry, was allowed in England to languish over the unmeaning faces of portrait customers'.[56] A further indication of the neglect of historical painting in particular, was the failure of a subscription intended to release West from this dependency on portraiture. The architect of the plan was the Archbishop of York, Robert Hay Drummond, who had apparently commissioned the picture in question ('Agrippina landing at Brundisium with the ashes of Germanicus') after having planted the idea in the artist's mind during a dinner at his London residence. According to Galt, these dinners were a regular occurrence, the conversation invariably turning to 'the celebrity with which the patronage of the arts had in all ages reflected on the most illustrious persons and families'. It seems that the Archbishop wasted no opportunity to impress upon others his regret that, 'in this great, flourishing, and triumphant nation, no just notion of the value of the arts was entertained'. It is little wonder then that he should have regarded the failure of the subscription (which raised just half of the required 3000*l*) as 'a stigma on his age, and on his country'.[57]

Among the other 'eminent...characters' who stood out from the sea of 'unmeaning faces' at this time were the bishops of Bristol and Worcester, Thomas Newton and James Johnson.[58] They too commissioned paintings of historical and religious subjects, after having been introduced to West, along with Drummond, by the Master of Westminster School, Dr William Markham. According to Galt, it was

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[56] Galt, II, 16-17.

[57] Ibid. II, 11-12, 20.

[58] Ibid. II, 7-9.

also through Markham that West first became acquainted with Dr Johnson, Edmund Burke and a Mr (presumably, Samuel) Dyer, members of the 'literary club' at which the artist was 'for many years a general visitor'.[59] This is the 'celebrated club' to which Hunt referred in 'Social Genealogy', and it is here that we find another instance of the 'link of personal acquaintance' between him and the 'original' Della Cruscans.[60] The 'Club' (or, 'Literary Club', as it was later known) had formed, in February 1764, at the suggestion of Joshua Reynolds. According to Boswell, meetings were initially held 'at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard Street Soho, one evening in every week', with the conversation 'generally continu[ing]...till a pretty late hour'.[61] Several of the original members were subsequently immortalised by Reynolds in a series of portraits commissioned for the library at Streatham Park.[62] This, of course, was one of the residences of the Thrales, with whom Johnson lived for a number of years from 1766. As is indicated in the recent edition of the Dictionary of National Biography, his presence there acted as 'magnet', attracting many of the 'Turk's Head members' to the 'dining-table and tea-urn' of the future Mrs Piozzi.[63] Johnson's 'well-known' appreciation of the Streatham 'urn' was in fact noted by Hunt in one of his articles for the Reflector, in which he considered the 'clear and gentle powers of inspiration' which tea afforded.[64] He would return to Johnson's 'humorous request' for the drink - written, 'or rather *effused* ', in verses addressed to 'Hetty' Thrale - in a subsequent

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[59] Galt, II, 57.

[60] 'Social Genealogy', 228.

[61] Quoting Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. Morris Mowbray (London, 1906), 164, and Norman Page, A Dr Johnson Chronology (London, 1990), 19-20.

[62] See the entry dated 10 Jan. 1781 in which Mrs Thrale (later Piozzi) 'writes out [in verse] the Characters of the People' in question Thraliana, I, 470-7.

[63] DNB, XL (2004), 390. There are several references to the Club in her Thraliana for the year 1777. See, for example, I, 41-2, 106 and 188.

[64] 'A Day by the Fire,—poetically and practically considered', Reflector, II, No. IV, 413.

article dedicated to the subject of 'Tea-Drinking' itself.[65] There, in a passage reminiscent of the earlier 'Social Genealogy' essay, Hunt constructed a chain of literary 'recollections' brought on at the sight of a tea cup. Among the links in this chain was the 'beautiful story of Angelica and Medoro' which, in turn, brings us back to the parlour at West's house in Newman Street.[66]

As Robert Hunt was to observe, in an article for the Examiner written shortly after the artist's death, on 11 March 1820, the move to the 'convenient and handsome house in Newman-Street' reflected a significant improvement in West's prospects (and, indeed, in the state of the arts generally).[67] The origins of this improvement may be traced back to Drummond and the picture of 'Agrippina landing at Brundisium' commissioned *c.* 1765-6. This, in spite of the failed subscription, is said to have made the artist's fortune.[68] It was apparently through Drummond's 'strenuous' efforts on his behalf that the picture was brought to the attention of George III (thereby establishing a connection which would enable the artist to play 'an instrumental role' in obtaining support for the Royal Academy, founded in 1768).[69] 'His Majesty immediately sent for Mr. WEST', Hunt explains, 'and after being highly satisfied with the Painter's execution of a given subject ['The Departure of Regulus from Rome'] appointed him his HISTORICAL Painter'. 'The Royal patronage was...soon followed by a partial encouragement from some of the Nobility', he continues, and West 'now found it necessary to procure a residence better suited to his increased popularity, and more usefully appropriate to his Art'. It was with this in mind that he bought the house in Newman Street, adding to it the 'spacious gallery...in the second large room at the end of which he...painted the great majority of his

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65 The essay (evidently written after 1830) quoted from the Everyman edition of the Selected Essays (London, 1929), 257.

66 'Tea-Drinking', 257-8.

67 'The Late President of the Royal Academy' (2 Apr. 1820), 221-2.

68 As stated in DNB, LX (1899), 325,

69 See Galt, II, 20-5, and DNB, LVIII (2004), 214.

pictures'.[70] Describing this gallery at greater length, in a further article, published just over a year later, Robert Hunt concluded that 'the metropolis and the empire itself receive[d] new glory from such a display of the effect of the genius and industry of one of its citizens'.[71] This is something upon which Lawrence would touch in his address to the Royal Academy of 1824, presenting the gallery as a valuable example to such 'young aspir[ants]' as the artist had 'instructed and cherished' throughout his career.[72] The 'gentle humanity' and 'parental fondness' to which Lawrence referred, was well illustrated in the portrait of West subsequently given in William Sandby's History of the Royal Academy (1862):

> His perfect command of temper, his uniform courtesy of manner, and above all, his real kindness of heart, were felt by all with whom he brought into communication. He never considered it an intrusion to be consulted by the young artist - he was liberal and generous to the full extent of his means, and was ready to befriend by his patronage, and assist with his purse, all who needed the help it was in his power to render. "No one was more accessible", says Leslie, "nor...so well qualified to give advice in any branch of art. He had generally a levee of artists at his house every morning before he began work. Nor did a shabby coat or an old hat ever occasion his door to be shut in the face of the wearer". By his own personal example, moral and social, and as a laborious, never-wearying professor of the arts, he was alike a pattern of purity, kindness, and perseverance to all who desired to win respect or renown.[73]

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[70] 'The Late President of the Royal Academy', 221.

[71] 'Mr. West's Pictures and Spacious Gallery', Examiner (10 Jun. 1821), 364-5.

[72] 'The Late Mr. West', Times (16 Nov. 1824), 2.

[73] The History of the Royal Academy of Arts: From its Foundation in 1768 to the Present Time, with Biographical Notices of all the Members, 2 vols. (London, 1862), I, 285.

According to John Taylor, who had himself paid many a visit to the artist's 'painting-room,...deriv[ing] much pleasure from his conversation', West's reputation as a 'warm patron of rising talents' had been as much a factor in his election to the Presidency of the Royal Academy as were his 'general skill, judgement, and knowledge'.[74] This is supported by Sandby, who cited the artist's 'quiet and genteel temper' and 'extreme courtesy and forbearance' as evidence that there was none better to succeed Reynolds upon his death on 23 February 1792.[75] It would seem that the majority of West's fellow Academicians agreed, for when the artist was subsequently elected, 'according to general expectation', there was 'only one dissenting voice'.[76]

West was by no means without his critics, however. In the address of 1824 Lawrence had reason to lament a marked 'contrast in [the] present fortunes' of the former Presidents. Reynolds' name retained its 'dazzling splendour', his 'golden precepts...acknowledged as canons of universal taste'. West, on the other hand, lay 'totally neglected', the 'general enthusiasm...and respect' which his 'fine productions' had 'so recently exited' now seeming 'but the fashion and impulse of an hour'.[77] The idea of a contrast between the two had, in fact, been exploited long before this in an 'Ode to the Academic Chair' written upon the occasion of West's election:

> How art thou fallen, thou *once* high-honuor'd CHAIR!
> Most hedgehog-like, thou bristlest up my hair.
> But possibly I'm only in a dream:
> If so, immediately O let me wake;
> Good MORPHEUS drag me from this sad mistake:
> Open my eyes, or lo, I shall blaspheme.

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[74] Records of My Life, I, 281, 283,

[75] Sandby, I, 249. West was elected on 19 Mar. 1792, his inaugural address taking place on 24 Mar.

[76] Quoting: Times (17 Mar. 1792), 2 and (19 Mar. 1792), 2

[77] 'The Late Mr. West', 2.

By heav'n! it is no vision - 'tis *too* plain
That thou, poor imp, art fated to sustain
Of Benjamin th' abominable b-m
What! after REYNOLDS, to take up with WEST!
Th' *antipodes* thou seekest, I protest...[78]

The 'Ode' was the work of the self-styled Laureate of the Academy, John Wolcot (author of a satire upon Boswell and Mrs Piozzi published in 1786).[79] Denouncing the satirist's hostility towards his friend as being 'not creditable to him', Taylor explained that it arose from Wolcot's 'partiality' to the painter John Opie of whom he was a 'zealous' supporter.[80] Wolcot's patronage of Opie had apparently commenced *c.* 1775, not long after which the satirist established himself in London, writing under the pseudonym 'Peter Pindar'.[81] The first in a series of highly successful Lyric Odes for the Royal Academicians, had appeared in 1782, in the course of which Wolcot not only 'f[e]lleth foul on Mr. West', but also attacked Angelica Kauffman, highlighting that discrepancy to which Hunt would later refer in the Reflector:

ANGELICA my plaudit gains -
Her art so sweetly canvass stains!
Her dames so Grecian, give me such delight!
But were she married to such gentle males
As figure in her painted tales,

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[78] From Odes of Importance, The Works of Peter Pindar, 5 vols. (London, 1794-1801), III, 190. In addition, see Ode XV of The Rights of Kings in which Wolcot attacks as 'paint-blasphemy' the choice of 'that *shadow* West' over the '*solid* Reynolds', Works, III, 47.

[79] Entitled Bozzy and Piozzi.

[80] Records of My Life, I, 283, 297.

[81] Information regarding Wolcot taken from the DNB, LIX (2004), 949-52.

I fear she'd find a stupid wedding night.[82]

More Odes followed, the criticism of 'George's Idol', becoming increasingly pronounced. A constant theme of Wolcot's satire, the King's preference for West was also noted in the 'Ode to the Academic Chair':

'I like WEST's works - he beats the RAPHAEL school;
I never lik'd that REYNOLDS - 'twas a fool -
Painted too thick - a dauber - 'twon't, 'twon't pass -
WEST, WEST, WEST's pictures are as smooth as glass:
Besides I hated REYNOLDS, from my heart:
He thought that I knew nought about the art.
'WEST tells me that taste is very pure -
That I'm a connoisseur, a connoisseur:
I like, I like, I like the works of WEST' -
Which proves that Kings with *little* can be blest,
And give the wings of eagles to a fly![83]

The image of the eagle and the fly, with which the 'Ode' concludes, brings to mind some of Gifford's comments concerning his own criticism of the Della Cruscans in his introductions to both the Baviad and Mæviad. The same may be said of the ode, 'Celebration; or The Academic Procession to Saint James', in which West - 'be-knighted/Amidst a moon-ey'd host of wonderment' - is portrayed as a 'glittering' butterfly. West's association with George III has been likened to a 'Faustian bargain', such perhaps as Merry appeared to have been on the brink of making before his visit to France in 1789 'converted' him to the Revolution.[84] In the closing lines of

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[82] See Odes II and XII, respectively, Works of Peter Pindar, I, 18, 44-5.

[83] Works of Peter Pindar, III, 192.

[84] Ibid. III, 420-32. 'Faustian bargain': Abrams' term: The Valiant Hero, 160.

Wolcot's ode, 'the tribe of Benjamin' are themselves described 'run[ning] their rigs' on 'poor *kingless* France'.[85] West was indeed one of a number of Academicians who went over to Paris in 1802, taking advantage of the brief Peace of Amiens between Britain and France (25 March 1802 - May 1803). As we shall see, this visit was to cast a shadow over the remainder of his Presidency, contributing perhaps, to the decline in his fortunes subsequently noted by Lawrence.

Renewing old acquaintance

That a visit to 'poor kingless France', as Wolcot put it, was always likely to have been controversial is highlighted in a note published in the Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes regarding a 'lost article', supposed to have been written by Reynolds following a visit to the French Academy in 1787. Here it is suggested that the article, in which the then President of the Royal Academy had apparently 'made the most flattering comments on J. L. David's new painting, 'The Death of Socrates', had been 'deliberately suppressed' by the editor of his Works [Malone] who wished it to be known that the 'professed Whig' had never sympathized with the French Revolution. Malone himself, it is stated, 'politely referred to Paris as "that opprobrious den of shame which, it is to be hoped, no polished Englishman will ever visit".[86] Nevertheless, on 13 August 1802 the following note appeared in the Times announcing the first wave in 'an immense outflow of visitors to the Republican capital':[87]

> The influx of Artists from England, Italy, and Germany, into Paris , is

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[85] Works of Peter Pindar, III, 432 and Gifford, Baviad and Mæviad, 62.

[86] E.W., 'A Lost Article on David by Reynolds', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 6 (1943), 223-4

[87] Quoting Clayden, The Early Life of Samuel Rogers, 425.

> beyond all idea considerable. The Gallery of the Louvre is full of them, on the days which are not public; and this privilege granted to strangers is one of the greatest favours which the French Government could have allowed, as well as of the greatest utility towards the prosecution of the study of the fine arts.[88]

This 'influx' was soon to be increased by the arrival of West, who set out from London two days later, in the company of his younger son Benjamin. He was joined there by a number of his fellow Academicians, including Fuseli and Farington who followed on 27 August.[89] Among those who followed the artists' example in taking advantage of the 'unusual opportunity for...study' that the Peace afforded, was Samuel Rogers, then in the process of designing the interior of his house at St James Place.[90] As we know, Rogers had been a valuable friend to Merry in the troubled months after his escape from France at the beginning of the war (in which, incidentally, the poet was assisted by David).[91] He therefore, represents another link in the 'series of connecting shakes' between the Della Cruscans and their 'Cockney' counterparts.[92] By 13 October, Rogers had been joined in Paris by Merry's former associate William Parsons. Given the account of his 'rapt'rous' and often-repeated visits to the 'lov'd Tribuna' in the 'Epistle to...Pindemonte', one might have expected the poet to have shared Rogers' enthusiasm for the collections housed at the Louvre.[93] However, in a letter to Maria Sharpe of 2 November, Rogers noted that, whilst he himself was

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[88] Times (13 Aug. 1802), 3.

[89] Farington Diary, II, 1.

[90] Early Life of Samuel Rogers, 424-5.

[91] See Hargreaves-Mawdsley, 258. It seems that David was also of assistance to West's student John Trumbull, The Autobiography of Colonel John Trumbull, Patriot Artist, 1756-1843, ed. Theodore Sizer, (New Haven and London, 1953), 223-5.

[92] Ibid. 283-5, 425. Hunt, 'Social Genealogy', 221.

[93] Florence Miscellany, 88.

'almost always there', his friend had 'been [to the galleries] only twice since he left England'.[94] The 'influx of Artists' had by now begun to recede and Rogers, who stayed in the hotel (de Marigny) at which West and a number of his fellow Academicians had taken apartments, was beginning to feel their absence. He would 'find none whose feelings [were] in unison with [his] own' among the 'flight of fashionables from Spa' who arrived in their place. Acting as 'a kind of *cicerone* to the new comers' was 'at first sight...delightful', yet it was a job he soon grew 'sick of'. On one occasion, for example, he reports, that the 'Miss Morgans' had mistaken the 'Transfiguration' for some 'new picture', their remarks upon it 'eclips[ing] those in Evelina on the pictures at Vauxhall'. In the first week of December, finding that even his 'greatest consolations' of 'a solitary walk along the Boulevards and a *tête-à-tête* with the Apollo or the Transfiguration' gave him 'but little enjoyment', Rogers prepared to 'turn [his] back on the gaieties of Paris'.[95]

Had he remained in France a little longer, however, Rogers may well have found a kindred spirit in another of the 'original Della Cruscans'. On 23 December 1802, Bertie Greatheed arrived in Paris with his wife Nancy (Ann) and their son, also named Bertie, to be welcomed by Parsons and Nancy's brother. Two days later, they paid the first of their, almost daily, visits to the 'beloved Gallery':

> Our first objects on going out were the Statues & Pictures of the Louvre. We took a general view of many old acquaintance beyond the Alps. Such an assemblage of the treasures of art never existed before either in ancient or modern times & the facility of visiting & studying them is perfect. The eye was so taken up with everything, that it could scarcely rest on any thing.[96]

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[94] Early Life of Samuel Rogers, 435.

[95] See the letters to Maria Sharpe (2 Nov.), Henry Rogers (4 Dec.) and Mrs Greg (5 Dec.), Ibid. 435-446.

[96] An Englishman in Paris, 1803. The Journal of Bertie Greatheed, eds J. P. T. Bury and J. C. Barry (London, 1953), 3-4, 62. The reference to the gallery dated 17 Feb.

Although he had written comparatively little on the subject for the Florence Miscellany, the reference to 'old acquaintance beyond the Alps' in his journal entry for 25 December indicates that Greatheed had taken a keen interest in the visual arts during the course of his previous travels on the Continent. This is evident from Mrs Piozzi's Observations and Reflections. Following their departure from Florence, the Greatheeds had apparently accompanied the Piozzis on various stages of their tour. This had taken in many a 'fine collection of pictures', as well as sites of architectural or archaeological interest and Mrs Piozzi had often found occasion to draw on her friend's 'correct taste, deep research, and knowledge', particularly with regards to architecture.[97] In her Preface to the Miscellany Mrs Piozzi had likened their verse writing to portrait painting, this being 'one of the most durable methods to keep Tenderness alive, and preserve Friendship from decay'.[98] She would also use an art-related metaphor when considering the nature of the account of Italy that her Observations and Reflections was to give to her friends at home (an idea which was subsequently taken up by the critic for the Monthly Review who described her journey as 'a canvas' upon which she had made a series of drawings).[99] That country 'is, at last, only a well-known academy figure', Mrs Piozzi concluded, 'from which we all sit down to make drawings according as the light falls, and our seat affords opportunity'.[100] This, in a literal sense, was the main purpose behind the Greatheeds' journey to Paris in 1802.

In their introduction, the editors of Greatheed's journal (a continuation of the diary which he had apparently kept during his travels in the 1780s) present his visit to Paris as 'a pilgrimage to the Mecca of art'.[101] It was undertaken, primarily, for the

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97 Observations and Reflections, I, 357, 397.

98 Florence Miscellany, 5.

99 'Observations and Reflections made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany. By Hester Lynch Piozzi', Monthly Review, (Feb. 1790), 194.

100 Observations and Reflections, I, 288-9.

101 An Englishman in Paris, ix.

benefit of his son, who had already entered a picture at one of the Royal Academy's annual exhibitions (they received 'a very pleasant letter from Artaud, giving an account of the flattering reception' of his second exhibit, 'The Cave of Despair', whilst still in Paris the following May).[102] The remark is reminiscent of West's description of Rome in the letter to Ramberg, noted at the beginning of the chapter, which in turn reflected his own feelings on setting out for that 'great repository of...painting and sculpture' some twenty-seven years previously. It provides further illustration of the extent to which Paris had taken over from the Italian city both as the 'favorite place' of 'men of eminence in those professions' and as a place of study for the aspiring artist.[103] The main object of study for the younger Bertie was Correggio's 'St Jerome' (formerly housed at Parma). He began sketching from this on 4 January in preparation for a copy which was finally completed on 18 June, by which time the Greatheed's were prisoners of war. In the opinion of his father, it was 'one of the few copies which [would] lose by being seen without the original'. 'I may be blinded by paternal affection', he noted, 'but I cannot be mistaken in the words and gestures of the great numbers who stand constantly looking upon it'.[104] The 'St Jerome' was among West's 'old acquaintance beyond the Alps' and one of the pictures which he recommended Ramberg to copy as he had himself done in 1763, apparently attracting a similar degree of attention to that given to Greatheed's son.[105] It was also the picture that the American artist John Trumbull set his sights on in 1780, having gained confidence from West's verdict on his copy of Raphael's 'Madonna della Sedia'. Like Greatheed, Trumbull would later see the original Correggio during one of his many controversial visits to France, his comments upon the relative merits of his tutor's copy echoing those of the poet on that produced by his son. Unlike Rogers, Greatheed had, of course, arrived in Paris long after West's departure (4 October).

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[102] An Englishman in Paris, May 7 1803, 142 & n.

[103] See 'The Sources of True Taste', 376, and Galt, I, 75.

[104] An Englishman in Paris, 10, 162.

[105] See 'The Sources of True Taste', 382, and Galt, I, 144-5.

Nevertheless, his journal offers some insight, into the reasons behind the increasing suspicion with which West and his 'tribe' were viewed following their return to England.

Among those to whom Greatheed and his family paid a number of visits was Helen Maria Williams, identified in his journal for 11 January 1803 as one of 'the only republicans [he had] yet seen'. Her house, he noted, was 'hated and every thing done there known to the First Consul'. Indeed, in a further entry, dated 1 February, he declared it to be 'almost taboo, in consequence of its republicanism'. 'We do not want to be sent away nor to meddle with any party', he added, 'and therefore go there less than otherwise we should'.[106] Williams had been among the guests at a public breakfast given by West on 27 September 1802, on the evening of which he had himself attended one of her 'Converzasione'. It seems that the breakfast had been shunned by a number of the Academicians who were of the opinion that West had deprived them of an opportunity to see Bonaparte by not 'communicating the information' concerning his expected attendance at a recent Exhibition. It was on that occasion that West was introduced to Bonaparte by the French minister of the Interior, the former addressing him 'in Italian...and express[ing] his approbation of the merit' of his work.[107] The 'tokens of respect' which he received from Bonaparte were apparently matched by the 'French Artists', who 'vied with each other who should shew him the most attention'.[108] According to Galt, the 'honourable reception' extended to West during this visit was said to have offended the king.[109] This is certainly supported by Farington who, on 12 December 1802, noted that 'the King's mind' was reportedly 'prejudiced against those members of the Academy who [had] been to Paris, as being democratical'.[110] The claim was to be repeated on numerous

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106 An Englishman In Paris, 22, 43.

107 See Farington Diary, II, 31, 43-7.

108 See Robert Hunt's article for the Examiner of 2 Apr. 1820, 222.

109 Galt, II, 191.

110 The report is attributed to 'a Nobleman', Farington Diary, II, 67.

subsequent occasions, the suspicion surrounding West evidently heightened by his partiality to Buonaparte', deemed to be an 'excessive indescretion' on his part, 'situated as He [was] with the King'.[111]

West's open 'enthusiasm for the Republican chief', and the difficulties this posed in his dealings with 'the higher powers in England', was noted by both Leigh and Robert Hunt in their various recollections of the artist (indeed, the former has been described as having 'caught a respect for Bonaparte' from this his 'most imposing relative').[112] The conversations in the Wests' parlour evidently contributed to the lessons which were impressed upon the young Leigh during his visits to the gallery with his mother who 'was in the habit of' pointing out to him 'the subjects relating to liberty...patriotism, and the domestic affections'. 'For our host, though born a Quaker, and appointed a royal painter, and not so warm in his feelings as those about him', he explained, 'had all the natural amenity belonging to those graces, and never truly lost sight of [the] love of freedom'.[113] At the same time, Hunt found that the 'gorgeous, azure augmented paintings, sown with lions and fleurs-de lis,...with their draperied steeds, crested and crown helmet, bronze-visaged warriors [and] kings all over heraldry',...fostered in [him] a secret reverence for courts'.[114] This was to be exploited by the critics of The Story of Rimini (1816), a poem which Hunt likened to a picture painted in his 'first manner' and in which he made 'abundant use' of that 'love of romance and chivalry' inspired by the paintings at Newman Street.[115]

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111 Dr Hayes' words to Robert Smirke, relayed to Farington by the latter and recorded 16 Nov. 1806, Ibid. IV, 148-9.

112 ALH, I, 149 and Carl R. Woodring, 'Leigh Hunt as Political Essayist', Leigh Hunt's Political and Occasional Essays, ed. Lawrence Huston Houtchens and Carolyn Washburn Houtchens (New York and London, 1962).

113 ALH, 150-1 and 'Sale of the Late Mr. West's Pictures', 286.

114 'The Townsman No. V' (Weekly True Sun, 29 Sept. 1833), quoted from Political and Occasional Essays, 302-3.

115 Quoting ALH, II, 170-1.

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF RIMINI

Dante's 'famous episode'

In his 1934 Italy in English Literature, Roderick Marshall identified Hunt's Story of Rimini (1816) as 'the first important poetic elaboration of an episode in Dante'.[1] The episode in question is that of Dante's encounter with the souls of ill-fated lovers, Paulo and Francesca, occurring in the fifth Canto of the Inferno (73-142). Introducing the episode in his preface, Hunt declared it to be the 'most cordial and refreshing one in the whole of that singular poem...which [had] always appeared to [him] a kind of sublime night-mare'. 'We even lose sight of the place, in which the saturnine poet... has thought proper to put the sufferers', he observed, 'and see the whole melancholy absurdity of his theology...falling to nothing before one genuine impulse of the affections'. The 'interest of the passage is greatly increased', Hunt added, 'by its being founded on acknowledged matter of fact' (a statement borne out by the many translations and commentaries that refer to the lovers' history).[2] He would outline these facts in the Appendix to his Stories from the Italian Poets (1846), providing both an abstract of the Divina Commedia as a whole and a translation, 'in the terza rima of the original', of Dante's 'famous episode':

> Francesca was daughter of Guido Novello da Polenta, lord of Ravenna.
>
> She was married to Giovanni, surnamed the Lame, one of the sons of Malatesta da Verrucchio, lord of Rimini.
>
> Giovanni...had a brother named Paulo the Handsome, who was a widower, and left a son.

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[1] Marshall, 367.

[2] The Story of Rimini, A Poem (London, 1816), vii-viii.

> Twelve years after Francesca's marriage, by which time she had become mother of a son who died, and of a daughter who survived her, she and...Paulo were slain together by the husband, and buried in one grave.[3]

Hunt acknowledged that 'certain particulars' concerning 'the date of Francesca's marriage' tended to 'qualify...the first romantic look of the story'.[4] Indeed, he conceded that the whole may 'have been a mere heartless case of intrigue and folly'. On the other hand, he argued, 'a romance may be displaced, only to substitute...a far more touching history'; one of 'long patience, long duty, struggling conscience [and] exhausted hope'. Whatever the circumstances, the 'prevailing impression [left] on the minds of posterity' was this:

> that Francesca was beguiled by her father into the marriage with the deformed and unamiable Giovanni, and that the unconscious medium of the artifice was the amiable and handsome Paulo; that one or both of the victims of the artifice fell in love with the other; that their intercourse, whatever it was, took place not long after the marriage; and that when [they] were slain in consequence, they were young lovers, with no other ties in the world.[5]

Though absent from the episode itself, the 'tradition of [Guido's] artifice' features in Boccaccio's commentary upon it (a translation of which precedes Hunt's outline of the 'only particulars hitherto really ascertained'). This was among the sources which Hunt had used when gathering material for the Story of Rimini, where it is cited - along with allusions to the episode found in Petrarch (Trionfo d'Amore) and Tassoni

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[3] Stories from the Italian Poets, with Lives of the Writers, 2 vols. (London, 1846), I, 96-7, 391-401.

[4] Ibid. 398-9. John D. Sinclair makes a similar observation in The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, 3 vols. (London, Oxford and New York, 1971), I, Inferno, 83.

[5] Stories from the Italian Poets, I, 398-400.

(Secchia Rapita) - as evidence of 'this little piece of private history's' popularity amongst the Italians.[6]

Of course, as Paget Toynbee's research has shown, the 'history' of Paulo and Francesca had also long been popular with the British, the earliest known allusion to it occurring in the Prologue to Chaucer's Legend of Good Women (1385-6).[7] In her introduction to a chronological record covering the period 1380-1920, Toynbee counts twenty-two translations of the episode as a separate piece. This is only exceeded by that of Count Ugolino de'Gherardeschi (Inferno, xxxiii), of which she records twenty-seven (presumably, including Hunt's own translation, also published in the Appendix of 1846).[8] It appears that the Ugolino episode was in fact the subject of the first avowed translation into English from Dante.[9] This was the work of portrait painter, Jonathan Richardson, who used the then 'very Curious and very little Known' episode to illustrate his theory regarding the relationship of poetry and painting in one of two Discourses published in 1719. Rather like Hunt after him, Richardson's translation is accompanied by a summary of an existing account of the episode (by Villani). There is also a description of a '*Bas-relief*', thought to be the work of Michaelangelo (though subsequently attributed to Pierino da Vinci), a cast of which had recently been brought to England by the historical painter Henry Trench:[10]

> He shews us the Count sitting with his Four Sons, one dead at his Feet, Over their Heads is a Figure representing Famine, and underneath is another to

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[6] Rimini, ix-x.

[7] See Toynbee's Dante in English Literature from Chaucer to Cary, (c. 1380-1844), 2 vols. (London, 1909), I, 9.

[8] Britain's Tribute to Dante in Literature and Art: A Chronological Record of 540 Years (c. 1380-1920) (London, 1921), vi-ii. Stories from the Italian Poets, I, 401-9.

[9] See Dante in English Literature, I, xxx-xxxi.

[10] Information concerning the bas-relief derived from Toynbee's 'The Earliest English Illustrators of Dante', Dante Studies (Oxford, 1921), 136-40.

> denote the River *Arno* , on whose Banks this Tragedy was acted. *Michelangelo* was the fittest Man that ever liv'd to Cut, or Paint this Story, if I had wish'd to see it represented in Sculpture, or Painting I should have fix'd upon this Hand: He was a *Dante* in his way, and he read him perpetually.[11]

Just over half a century later Ugolino provided the subject for what appears to be the first painting from the Divina Commedia by an English artist; Joshua Reynolds' 'Count Hugolino and his children', exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1773.[12] In spite of the initial interest , however, it was the episode from the fifth Canto of the Inferno, that was to prove the more popular in 'the domain of art'. In the period covered by her Chronological Record, Toynbee identifies 'more than fifty' pictorial representations of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode, compared with just eight of 'Ugolino'. Of these fifty, nine are by sculptors, the first being an alto-relievo in marble by Richard Westmacott, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1838.[13]

In the introduction to her chronology, Toynbee states that it was Henry Fuseli who executed the earliest oil painting of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode, referring to his Royal Academy Exhibit of 1786. This is contradicted by the record itself, which includes an anonymous painting, entitled 'Francesca and Paulo: a story from the *Inferno* of Dante', shown at the Society of Artists of Great Britain in 1778. Fuseli was, however, responsible for the earliest recorded drawing, produced at Rome the previous year (one of six studies of subjects from the Commedia).[14] Amongst the subscribers to Hunt's Juvenilia (1801), Fuseli is named in both the ode 'To Honour' and 'The Progress of Painting'. These references, together with comments upon the

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[11] Two Discourses. I. An Essay on the whole Art of Criticism as it Relates to Painting. II. An Argument in behalf of the Science of a Connoisseur, quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 196-9.

[12] Ibid. I, xxxv-xxxvi.

[13] Britain's Tribute to Dante, vii

[14] Ibid. vii, 31.

Artist (a regular at the literary dinners given by Hunt's step-father-in-law, Rowland Hunter) found in Hunt's Autobiography and in the earlier Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries, show that the poet was familiar with his treatment of subjects from Gray, Milton, Shakespeare and Cowper.[15] Whilst there is no clear indication that Hunt knew of his early representations from the Inferno, the following anecdote, recorded in the latter volume, suggests that he was, at least, aware of his admiration for its author:

> A student of the Academy told me, that Mr. Fuseli coming in one night, when a solitary candle had been put on the floor in a corner of the room, to produce some effect or other, he said it looked "like a damned soul". This was by way of being Dantesque, as Michael Angelo was.[16]

Given his attendance at Hunter's dinners, and his own interest in the subject, it is likely that Hunt would have seen some of Fuseli's later developments upon the studies conducted at Rome. These included a picture of 'Count Ugolino', shown at the Royal Academy in 1806, and a further sketch of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode exhibited in 1818 with the following title:

> Dante, in his descent to Hell, discovers amidst the flights of hapless lovers whirled about in a hurricane, the forms of Paolo and Francesca of Rimini: obtains Virgil's permission to address them; and being informed of the dreadful blow that sent them to that abode of torment at once, overcome by pity and terror, drops like a lifeless corpse on the rock.

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[15] Juvenilia; or, a Collection of Poems written between the ages of twelve and sixteen, 2nd. edn. (London, 1801), 114, 134. ALH, II, 36-7. Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries with Recollections of the Author's Life, and of his visit to Italy (London, 1828), 289-91.

[16] Ibid. 290.

> 'E caddi, come corpo morto cade'
>
> Dante Inferno, c.v.[17]

This was amongst the entries singled out by Robert Hunt, in a review of the exhibition for the Examiner (10 May), as proof of his assertion that it was 'better than many past ones' being 'considerably improved and beautiful'. 'For even if many ...of the Artists do not advance', he insisted, 'some have advanced greatly. Their thinking and executive powers have been well nurtured by evident pains-taking and emulation'.[18]

Whilst the 'fashion' for English translations from Dante that developed in the mid-eighteenth century may also be traced to Richardson's Discourses, the first literary reference to the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode recorded by Toynbee occurred much earlier than this. The following extract is taken from Robert Greene's Debate betweene Follie and Love ('licensed, apparently, in April 1584; first known edition, 1587'):

> Love springeth of sodaine and sundrie causes, by receyving an apple, as Cidippe: by looking out at a Windowe, as Scilla: by reading in a Booke, as the Ladie Francis Rimhi.[19]

The 'Booke' to which Greene refers (the 'Galeotto' of Dante's episode) is generally recognised as being the romance of Lancelot of the Lake which, as Hunt pointed out in the preface to his poem, was itself 'a great favorite all over Europe, up to a late period'.[20] Though among the 'particulars' omitted from Boccaccio's commentary, it soon become as much a part of the 'tradition' surrounding the episode as that of Guido's 'artifice'. In a footnote to his Stories, Hunt referred to Ugo Foscolo's opinion

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[17] Quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 428.

[18] 'Royal Academy Exhibition', Examiner, 301-2.

[19] Quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 72-3.

[20] Rimini, x.

that 'the incident of the book is invention'.[21] Nevertheless, here, as in the earlier preface to the Story of Rimini, in which he had argued that 'the very circumstance of [Dante's] having related it at all' was 'a warrant of its authenticity', he seemed inclined to allow tradition 'its reasonable weight'.[22] As the following extract shows, Thomas Warton was another of those who perpetuated Dante's version:

> Dante, who from many circumstances of his own amours, appears to have possessed the most refined sensibilities about the delicacies of love, inquires in what manner, when in the other world, they first communicated their passion to each other. Francisca answers, that they were one day sitting together, and reading the romance of *Lancelot*; where represented in the same critical situation with themselves. Their changes of colour and countenance, while they were reading, often tacitly betrayed their yet undiscovered feelings. When they came to that passage in the romance, where the lovers, after many tender approaches, are gradually drawn by one uniform reciprocation of involuntary attraction to kiss each other, the book dropped from their hands. By a sudden impulse and an irresistible sympathy, they are tempted to do the same.[23]

The account given here would appear to contradict Warton's earlier assertion that Francesca 'fell in love with Paulo' and, 'the passion' proving to be 'mutual', 'was betrothed to him in marriage' before 'her family chose rather that she should be married to Lanciotto'. A prior 'communication' would, in turn, negate her claim that their reading of Lancelot 'betrayed their yet undiscovered feelings'. However, Warton does not draw attention to the discrepancy, nor does he speculate on the circumstance

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[21] Stories from the Italian Poets, I, 100n, 398-9.

[22] Rimini, viii and Stories from the Italian Poets, I, 400.

[23] The History of English Poetry from the close of the eleventh to the commencement of the eighteenth century, 3 vols. (London, 1774-81), III, 242-3.

of the book. The only comment that he makes regarding this part of Francesca's story, appears in a footnote to the extract from the Inferno with which his summary concludes (incidentally, that which formed the basis for the Story of Rimini) in which he points out that the 'Galeotto' with whom she associates the work was 'one of the knights of the Round Table...commonly called Sir *Galhaad* in *Arthur's* romance'.[24]

What Warton fails to explain is that the 'Sir Galhaad' in question was in fact a 'highly significant' character in the story read by Paulo and Francesca. 'Galehaut', or, 'Galehault', of Surluse and the Long Isles (sometimes confused with Sir Galahad), was a 'close friend' of Lancelot, who was apparently responsible for introducing the knight to Guinevere.[25] In this context, the relevance to Dante's lovers seems clear enough. Nevertheless, the precise manner in which he introduces 'Galeotto' into the episode has been a cause of some confusion amongst commentators. In Walter Savage Landor's The Pentamoran (a series of imaginary conversations between Petrarch and Boccaccio, published in 1837), Boccaccio is heard to make the following observation regarding the verse in this passage of the Inferno:

> Any one would imagine...that Galeotto was really both the title of the book, and the name of the author; neither of which is true. Galeotto, in the Tavola Ritonda, is the name of the person who interchanges the correspondence between Lancilotto and Ginevra...Dante was stimulated in his satirical vein, when he attributed to Francesca a ludicrous expression, which she was very unlikely in her own nature, and greatly more so in her state of suffering, to employ or think of, whirled round as she was incessantly with her lover.[26]

The 'ludicrous expression' to which he refers is this: 'Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo

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[24] History of English Poetry, III, 242-3 &n.

[25] The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed. Margaret Drabble, revised edn. (Oxford and New York, 1997), 382.

[26] Landor quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 99-100.

scrisse' ('A Galeotto was the book and he that wrote it').[27] That it did indeed give rise to the sort of error that Landor suggests is illustrated by a passage in John Colin Dunlop's 1814 History of Fiction. Noting that the Decameron was also known as the 'Principe Galeotto', Dunlop explains that the alternative title is thought to have derived from the Inferno, 'Galeotto being the name of that seductive book, which was read by Paulo and Francesca'. A similar account of this 'interesting production' would appear in Thomas Roscoe's The Italian Novelists, published in 1825.[28]

Although it was written (and, presumably, published) in London, Greene's reference to the book of the 'Ladie Francis' is not the first original use of 'Dante's famous episode' found in English literature. As Toynbee points out, the reference is, in fact, 'second-hand', The Debate betweene Follie and Love being a translation of an earlier French work (Louise Labé's Le debat de folie et d'amour) published at Lyons in 1555.[29] A complete translation of the Divina Commedia in heroic couplets was produced by William Huggins c.1760. However, his directions regarding its publication went unheeded after his death in 1761 and the manuscript was eventually lost.[30] Charles Burney's prose translation of the Inferno - also dated 1761 - suffered the same fate (an interesting detail regarding Burney's effort, in light of Hunt's account of the comfort and distraction afforded by his own work on the Story of Rimini, is that it was apparently undertaken following the death of his first wife in order to allay his grief and 'combat that most dangerously consuming of all canker-worms upon life and virtue, utter inertness').[31] The lack of an English version of any part of the Commedia - other than the 'judicious and spirited summary' provided by

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[27] Inferno, v, 137, Sinclair's translation, 78-9.

[28] Dunlop and Roscoe quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 189 and 354.

[29] Ibid. I, 72.

[30] Ibid. xxxiv, 307.

[31] Quoted from Madame d'Arblay's (Frances Burney) recollection of her father's translation, cited by Toynbee in 'English Translations of Dante in the Eighteenth Century', Dante Studies, 293-4. For Hunt's comments on his poem see ALH, II, 170.

Warton - was noted by William Hayley in his Essay on Epic Poetry, published in 1782, the notes to which contain a translation, in terza rima, of the first three Cantos of the Inferno, undertaken 'a few years ago, to oblige a particular friend'. Hayley had 'since been solicited to execute an entire translation of Dante' and it was apparently his intention to 'discover...the sentiments of the public' with regards to 'such a version' before making a decision.[32] As it turned out, he was anticipated by the 'well-known virtuoso and art-collector', Charles Rogers who, in 1782 (presumably, after the publication of Hayley's Essay) issued a blank verse translation of the Inferno which was to earn him the distinction of having produced the first printed English translation of an entire section of the Commedia.[33]

In a note on Hayley in the Feast of the Poets, which gives some insight into his reading during the composition of the Story of Rimini (the preface to which it anticipates), Hunt suggested that the author of the Essay on Epic Poetry 'would have cut a more advantageous figure as a translator than as an original poet'. He drew this conclusion from some of the specimens in Hayley's notes, including that of the 'three first Cantos of Dante, which if far beneath the magestic simplicity of the original', he stated, 'is at least, for spirit as well closeness, much above the mouthing nonentities which have been palmed upon us of late years for that wonderful poet'.[34] There is no mention of Charles Rogers here, nor any indication as to whether or not Hunt knew of his attempt. Although it was printed, and subsequently noticed in both the Gentleman's Magazine(1805) and John Nichol's Literary Anecdotes (1812-15), Rogers' Inferno does not appear to have been published. Nevertheless, Hunt's remarks might well be applied to Rogers' translation which, in Toynbee's opinion, is not only unfaithful, but also 'entirely devoid of any spark of poetry'. By way of illustration, she points to his treatment of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode:

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[32] An Essay on Epic Poetry; In Five Epistles to the Revd. Mr Mason. With Notes (London, 1782), 172, 174-97.

[33] Dante in English Literature, I, xxxv,

[34] Feast of the Poets, 50-1.

That was the point of time which conquer'd us,
When, reading that her captivating smile
Was by the Lover she adored kiss'd;
This my Companion, always with me seen,
Fearful, and trembling, also kiss'd my mouth.
The Writer, Galeotto, nam'd the Book.
But from that day we never read in't more'.[35]

In describing the translation as 'unfaithful' to the original, Toynbee disagrees with Richard Farmer (Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge) who believed that Rogers had succeeded in giving 'the *Sense*' of the original. Nichols agreed with this statement which was written in Farmer's own copy of the translation and later reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine. According to Nichols, Rogers had 'chiefly attended to giving the sense of his author with fidelity; the character of a Poet not seeming to have been the object of his ambition'.[36] The import of Francesca's closing statement is perhaps lost in Rogers's translation of it, which seems to indicate only that they never read the book again, rather than that they ceased to read it at that point. However, it does tend to read like a literal translation, and Rogers has certainly not taken the liberty of altering the passage as other translators have. The only other obvious inaccuracy here occurs in the preceding line, from which (as Landor would say of the original) one might imagine that 'Galeotto' was the name of both the book and its author.

Among those who did '[take] some liberty with the original' - as the writer for the Critical Review noted - was Henry Boyd, whose translation, or, paraphrase, of the Inferno appeared three years later.[37] In the absence of Huggins' manuscript, it is Boyd who is generally credited with having produced the first translation into English of the complete Commedia. This was published in 1802, apparently providing John

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[35] Dante in English Literature, I, 384-5.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Critical Review (June, 1785) quoted from Ibid. 419-21.

Raphael Smith with the inspiration for a painting of 'Paulo and Francosia', exhibited at the Royal Academy the following year.[38] As the critic for the Gentleman's Magazine (May 1785) observed, Boyd's version of the Inferno, which he found to be 'in general correct, spirited and frequently poetical', was - unlike that of Rogers - 'often diffuse', the 'sense of the author' being frequently 'amplified'.[39] This is evident in the following, corresponding, extract containing Francesca's account of 'the source of [their] eternal pains' (the whole of which was given 'as a specimen' in the Monthly Review for December):

'One day (a day I ever must deplore!)
The gentle youth, to spend a vacant hour,
To me the soft seducing story read,
Of *Launceclot* and fair *Genevra's* love,
Whilst fascinating all the quiet grove
Fallacious Peace her snares around us spread.

'Too much I found th'insidious volume charm,
And *Paulo's* mantling blushes rising warm,
Still as he read the guilty secret told:
Soon from the line his eyes began to stray;
Soon did my yielding looks my heart betray,
Nor needed words our wishes to unfold.

'Eager to realize the story'd bliss,
Trembling he snatch'd the half-resented kiss,
To ill soon lesson'd by the pandar-page!,
Vile pandar-page! it smooth'd the paths of shame.'

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[38] Dante in English Literature, I, 639-40.

[39] Ibid. I, 419-21.

While thus she spoke, the partner of her flame
Tun'd his deep sorrows to the whirlwind's rage.

So full the symphony of grief arose,
My heart, responsive to the lover's woes
With thrilling sympathy convuls'd my breast:
Too strong at last for life my passion grew'
And, sick'ning at the lamentable view,
I fell, like one by mortal pangs oppress'd.[40]

A significant departure from the original here is that it is Paulo who reads from the book. The blame of the 'soft seducing story' is also heralded early, the 'point of time which conquer'd' them being much less distinct than in Rogers' translation. Furthermore, Boyd has 'taken the liberty' of situating the lovers in a 'quiet grove' (something which Hunt would make much of in the Story of Rimini). In her study of the early translations of the Commedia, V. Tinkler-Villani, draws a comparison between Boyd's stanza form and rhyme scheme and that of the Fairy Queen, arguing that it was his intention 'to ensure that the reader saw a similarity between Dante's poem and the only major poetic allegory in English'.[41] According to his prison 'Memorandum', Hunt annotated his Spenser (an early influence on his poetry) while working on The Story of Rimini.[42] As we shall see, he also acquired a copy of the Parnaso Italiano, which was to '[aid] Spenser...in filling [his] walks with visions of gods and nymphs...enchantresses and magicians'.[43] This may have been an edition of

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[40] Quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 415, 422.

[41] Visions of Dante in English Poetry, Translations of the Commedia from Jonathan Richardson to William Blake (Amsterdam, 1989), 130.

[42] See the entry for 17 March 1813, The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ed. Thornton Hunt, 2 vols. (London, 1862), I, 81.

[43] ALH, III, 185.

the anonymous Extracts from the works of the most celebrated Italian poets (1798) - or, I Fiori del Parnasso Italiano; ovvero una Raccolta di Rime Estratta dall' Opere de' più Celebri Poeti Italiani - in which Boyd's translation appeared under the anglicised title 'Paul and Frances'. This volume, also featured his 'Hugolino', along with further passages from the third and twenty-fourth Cantos of the Inferno, a number of which were taken from Hayley.[44]

It would seem, from Toynbee's records, that the 'specimen' of Boyd's Inferno printed in the Monthly Review, constitutes one of the earliest appearances in English literature of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode in isolation. As she points out in her Chronological Record (though not in the earlier Dante in English Literature) the first translation of the story actually intended as a separate piece - and, it seems, the only one prior to Hunt's Story of Rimini (excepting a version from 1794, which appeared in conjunction with the Ugolino episode) - was also produced in 1785.[45] This was 'The Story of Francesca from the Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno: A Free Translation', written at Florence by William Parsons. He was, of course, one of the 'original Della Cruscans' with whom Hunt and his associates would be compared, both in Maginn's article of 1821 and, implicitly, in the earlier 'Cockney School' essays. In Chapter II I suggested that Parsons' 'imitations' of Ariosto, and his admiration for the exhibits in the Uffizi (the Venus de Medicis, in particular), may have reminded Hunt of his holidays at West's house in Newman Street. He also anticipated him in translating passages from Tasso's Aminta (Hunt's Amyntas, A Tale of the Woods appeared in 1820). Parsons' version of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode was printed in the Florence Miscellany, a volume which, it is worth remembering, has been regarded as a statement not only of opposition to political oppression, but also of a desire to effect a revival in the fortunes of both the Italian and the English 'Muse'. There it was accompanied by the following explanation of the story 'for the information of such [E]nglish readers as happen not to have read Dante' (his description of the brothers

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[44] See the entry for this volume in Dante in English Literature, I, 570.

[45] See Britain's Tribute to Dante, vii, xi, 34.

and the 'resemblance' between Paulo and Francesca, anticipating that of Hunt):

> It may be necessary to say that this Poem is an allegorical fiction of his being conducted by Virgil to the infernal regions - He often...introduces historical facts, among which is this story of Francesca, the daughter of Guido da Polenta lord of Ravenna, under whose government Dante pass'd the close of his life. Francesca was married to Lancelot the son of Malatesta lord of Rimini a gallant and brave man, but deform'd, haughty and ungraceful; in which his Brother Paulo was exactly his opposite, being handsome, affable, and of elegant manners. The resemblance of character between Francesca and Paulo, and the frequent opportunities they had of being together, gave birth to a violent passion for each other, which produced an incestuous commerce, that continued till it was discover'd by the husband and ended by his killing them with the same blow in the very moment of their guilty pleasure.[46]

Somewhat curiously, given the growing popularity of the episode, Parsons' poem was not among those that began to finnd their way into the British press the following year. It was, however, published in his A Poetical Tour (1787) and - with minor revisions - in his Travelling Recreations of 1807 (in which year appeared a further, blank verse, translation of the Inferno, by Nathaniel Howard).[47] Parsons sent a copy of the latter volume to his fellow translator of Dante, William Hayley, whose 'namby-pamby' style - as Saintsbury termed it - has often been compared to that of the Della Cruscans (the Journal de la Société de 1789 was more complimentary, naming Hayley, alongside Merry, as one of 'the two best poets of England' at that time).[48] He

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[46] Florence Miscellany, 116-7.

[47] Travelling Recreations, I, 172-9. See Dante in English Literature, II, 58-61.

[48] See The English Della Cruscans, 298, George Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature (London, 1929), 597 and - for the Journal - Erdman's Commerce des Lumières, 104-5.

had earlier paid tribute to the poetic genius of 'Eartham's chill seat' in another of his contributions to the Florence Miscellany ('On the Pleasures of Poetry', 134-6), which also featured in the later collection.[49]

Unlike Hayley - whom Toynbee identifies as a 'pioneer' in 'the history of Dante in English literature' for having attempted to translate the Inferno in the original terza rima - Parsons wrote his version of the Francesca story in heroic couplets (as would Hunt).[50] His translation commences at line 26 of the original (lines 26-7: '...or son venuto/La dovemolto pianto mi percuote' are also used as a motto), with Dante's arrival in the second circle of Hell:

> And now a scene I view'd where chearful day
> Ne'er yet bestow'd one joy-inspiring ray,
> But mingled groans invade my startled ear,
> Like the dread sounds affrighted sailors hear,
> When warring winds with adverse fury sweep
> The undulating bosom of the deep:
> So, blended all, I heard the distant yells
> Of souls whom that infernal blast impells,
> And as it whirls along their rapid course,
> Inflicts new tortures with increasing force;
> Till, here arriv'd, with more distinguished sound,
> Shrill shrieks of woe, and blasphemies abound.
>
> To this abhorred spot are those convey'd,
> Who were on earth by sensual Lust betray'd;
> See from afar as clouds of starlings sail,
> Unnumber'd borne upon the wintry gale,
> Huddled, confus'd , along they seem to go,

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[49] The English Della Cruscans, 50, 127.

[50] Dante in English Literature, I, 360.

Drifted, both here, and there, above, below;
Banish'd all hope that e'er their grief should cease,
Grief that admits nor solace, nor decrease.
But as they nearer throng th'aereal way,
Like cranes they come in regular array;
And as those birds send forth incessant moans,
Through the dark air resound their piercing groans.
"What haples victims these condemn'd to share
"Eternal pangs of comfortless despair?"
Curious I ask'd, and Virgil thus replied,
"The first an Empress, and her sway was wide,
"In sin triumphant, destitute of shame,
"All vice she foster'd, to remove the blame,
"Of her own deeds, the marriage couch she stain'd
"With blood, and after murder'd Ninus, reign'd.
"The next is she who press'd the funeral pyre,
"False to Sichæus' shade, and prey to new desire.
"Then Cleopatra, and the wanton dame
"For whom proud Ilion's turrets sunk in flame,
"Achilles next, who to his latest hour
"Felt, and unwilling own'd Love's mighty pow'r.
"Paris and Tristan - Numbers more appear[51]
"By the same master sent untimely here."
While thus to me my kind conductor names
Of ancient time the num'rous knights and dames
Who there are lost, and cannot hope relief;

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[51] Parsons's note: In the Commentary of Vellutello on Dante, we are told that Tristan was the Nephew of Marcus King of Cernonia, and one of the knights of the round Table in the time of Arthur.

Trembling I heard, and was oppress'd with grief.

Having described the procession of the damned, which differs from the original only in that the names of Semiramis and Helen are omitted, Parsons proceeds to Dante's invocation of Paulo and Francesca:

"Poet", I said, "let me with those converse,
"(If they perchance their story will rehearse)
"That foremost pair who now so swiftly sail,
"Light as autumnal leaves before the gail.
He answer'd - "Soon as they approach more near,
"Invoke them by that love which still is dear,
"They gladly will obey the potent spell,
"And all their inmost feelings truly tell."
Then when beheld within the utmost reach
Of mortal voice, I thus those shades beseech.
"O love-impassion'd souls one moment spend
"In converse with a sympathizing friend."
As two fond doves returning seek their nest,
With firm uplifted wings, and throbbing breast,
Then pleas'd alight - thus thro the murky air
They come, and leave their sad companions there,
Thus at my feet with swift impatience fall;
So pow'rful was to them my call.
"O gen'rous Mortal whose warm bosom glows
"With kind compassion for th'unequ'ld woes
"Of a fond pair, who sacrific'd to Love,
"Ting'd with their mingled blood the earth above:
"Were we belov'd by that dread Pow'r who reigns

"O'er Heav'ns pure seats, and Hell's tremendous plains,
"We would for thee with pray'rs besiege his throne,
"For thee whose pity has for us been shewn.
"If aught from us thou cans't desire to hear,
"We'll pour our sorrows on thy curious ear,
"Now the fierce whirlwind blows a slacken'd gale,
"List then and learn the melancholy tale.
"'Twas where the Po to Adria's bosom flows,
"Love that in gentle breasts is still ador'd
"Inflam'd this youth the brother of my Lord;
"My charms he lov'd, for I on earth was fair,
"Now chang'd by bloody death and long despair.
"Love, that from one prefer'd exacts return,
"Bade me for him with equal passion burn.
"So strong the tye it still subsists below;
"As join'd above in joy, so here in woe.
"Love bought us both to one untimely death,
"My hated husband stop'd our mutual breath:
"Still in my thought the dire remembrance springs:
"And joins with conscious guilt its anguish'd stings;
"Hell's deepest pit, where rules accursed Cain,
"Await the wretch who hath his brother slain".

The mournful words that from her lips depart
I felt like fest'ring arrows in my heart,
The Poet rous'd me, and from silence brought.
"What soft desires, what tender joys," I said,
"Have these sad victims to destruction led!
"Thy words, Francesca, of severe distress
"My troubled soul with answ'ring pangs opress,

"But say how first on each bewilder'd soul,

"How unawares this hapless passion stole."

Then she to me - "No greater grief I know

"Than to recall past joys in times of woe;

"That can they leader tell - yet thou shalt hear,[52]

"Tho drops with ev'ry word a bitter tear.

"One day we read how Lancelot's throbbing heart

"Felt the soft torments of love's piercing dart.

"Alone we were, in innocence secure,

"For till that moment all our thoughts were pure,

"But then too oft as our up-lifted eyes

"Each other met, the conscious blushes rise;

"Untill at length the fatal crisis came,

"When as we read how first the kiss of flame,

"On fair Ginevra's smiling mouth impress'd,

"Rais'd love's wild tumults in her yielding breast;

"The youth beside me sought an equal bliss,

"With trembling lips I met his burning kiss:

"Thus did that curs'd book, with pois'nous art,

"To us perform its Galeotto's part;

"That day no more the luscious page we priz'd,

"For all it feign'd in us was realiz'd."

While the dire story thus her words unfold,

Down her sad partner's cheek such torrent's roll'd,

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[52] Parsons's note: Perhaps alluding to this passage of Virgil "Infandum Regina jubes renovares dolorem", which seems to be the opinion of Vellutello, but some other commentators think it rather refers to Boetius who was much studied by Dante in the time of this banishment and says in his treatise De Consol Philos. "In omni adversitate fortunæ infelicissimum genus infortunii est fuisse felicem."

That as the woe-fraught tale she ceas'd to tell,
O'ercome with pity like a corpse I fell.

Particularly worthy of note here, in view of the difficulties experienced by a number of other translators, is Parson's handling of the line concerning the 'Galeotto'. This is followed by a footnote - anticipating the explanations given by both Hunt and Landor - in which he points out that the story was 'much read and esteem'd in the time of Dante', and that the 'Galeotto' in question was 'the convenient friend of Lancelot and Ginevra, who inflam'd their mutual passion'.[53]

The circumstance of the book is the subject of one of the 'very whimsical notes' in what Toynbee presents as 'the last, and perhaps the most curious specimens of eighteenth-century English Dante translation'.[54] These were the versions (referred to above) of the 'Paulo and Francesca' and 'Ugolino' episodes by the 'well-known [and] eccentric virtuoso', Henry Constantine Jennings. Produced and (like Parsons' poem) privately printed in 1794, they were published four years later in his Summary and Free Reflections, in which the great Outline only, and Principal Features, of several Interesting Subjects, are impartially traced and candidly examined. In the introduction to his earlier work, dated 13 September 1794, Jennings gave his opinion of the Divina Commedia and outlined his reasons for having found only these episodes worth attempting:

> Dante's Poem of Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso, is, certainly *Poetry* : and though written at so early and uncultivated a Period as that of the thirteenth Century, is equal to any Thing that could reasonably be expected from so grating a Subject, even at the best Times of modern Literature. It is, however, upon the whole, a painful Undertaking to read it regularly through: for, independent of the manifold Repetition, and uninteresting and extravagant

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[53] Florence Miscellany, 116-22.

[54] Dante in English Literature, I, xxxv.

> Variation of the same nauseous Descriptions; the principal Object of its Merit, at the Time it was written, consisted in the Satire, aimed against the surviving Reputation of such of his Enemies as were departed during the busiest Period of the Author's Life, which, considering too the gothic Language it is written in, has by a Lapse of Five Hundred Years, almost precluded any just Claim to its present Power of amusing, if its Reader be not a meer Antiquarian.
>
> I except, however, the following Canto [V], and the consummately pathetic Narrative of Hugolino, with, perhaps, Half a Dozen more short Passages;...
>
> The first is comprised in a consistent *ensemble*, and besides the little Novel of Francesca (the most elegant in the whole Piece), it conveys a sufficient Idea of Dante's Management throughout the Poem. The Hugolino is unique in its kind...[55]

The way in which Jennings highlights the 'little Novel of Francesca' here is reminiscent of Hunt's comments regarding this 'most cordial and refreshing' passage in his Preface to the Story of Rimini. There is also a striking similarity between the conclusion of Jennings translation of the episode and the closing line of Canto III of Hunt's poem (being that which contains 'the substance' of Dante's story - and not, as is indicated in his Preface, 'the concluding paragraph of the second Canto).[56] Indeed, Jennings' version appears to be unique (certainly amongst the early translations) in its omission of the lines containing Dante's response:

> One fatal Day, Amusement all our Aim,
> Alone, and unsuspecting, the sweet Tale
> Of Love enthralled Launcelot was our Theme:
> Oft' by his Suff'rings, were our Tears enforc't,

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[55] Quoted Dante in English Literature, I, 517-8.

[56] Rimini, vii, viii.

> Our Countenance impassion'd and inflam'd,
> Yet, one sole Period, truely was the Cause
> Of our Defeat: the Smile, the heav'nly Smile!
> Of the long lov'ed Genevra, when we read,
> Kiss't by her glorious Lover: he, from whom
> Not Death itself cou'd part me, tremblingly
> My trembling Lips impress't, with a like Kiss,
> Pander! the Book, Pander its Writer was:
> That day we read no more.[57]

It is at this point that the note regarding the book - and Dante's motives in recording the history of Paulo and Francesca - appears:

> This melancholy Event...seems to be recorded by Dante, with the sole View of illustrating...the dangerous Practice of young People's reading Romances together in Private; and still more so, where there already exists an Inclination between the Parties, as is the present Instance.[58]

Kenelm Henry Digby would also raise the issue of the 'lesson awfully exemplified' in this 'most sublime passage of the greatest Christian poet', in The Broad Stone of Honour: or the True Sense and Practice of Chivalry, published, anonymously, in 1822 and enlarged in 1826-7. 'We have all repeatedly heard', he noted, 'that such reading [of chivalrous romances] has been condemned by holy persons as being at least injurious, if not absolutely opposed, to the interests of the spiritual life'.[59]

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[57] Jennings: 'The Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno', quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 520. The line in Hunt's poem reads 'That day they read no more', Rimini, 78.

[58] Quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 520.

[59] The edition of 1826-7, quoted from Ibid. II, 462-3.

Like Boyd, before him, Jennings substituted the term 'Pander' for 'Galeotto' when referring to the particular 'chivalric romance' read by the lovers. This is likely to have been influenced by the character of 'Pandare' (or, 'Pandarus') found in both Boccaccio and Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. That Chaucer was himself inclined to be 'a little ungrateful with his jokes upon chivalrous stories', is something upon which Hunt commented in his preface, pointing to the Launcelot of the Lake, which the poet 'mentions...in his significant way, as a work held in great estimation by the ladies' in his Canterbury Tales.[60] There is a similarly 'significant' reference to the episode in Henry Hallam's Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries (1837-9). 'I will not dwell on the story of Francesca da Rimini', he states, 'because no one...is likely to dispute that a Romagnol lady in the age of Dante would be able to read the tale of Lancelot. But that romance had long been written; and other ladies doubtless had read it, and possibly had left off reading it in similar circumstances, and as little to their advantage'.[61] The term 'Pander' also features in Robert Hunt's account of a picture of 'Paulo and Francesca', by A[rcher] J[ames] Oliver, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1809:

> This piece has a forcible effect, and the lovers are of those graceful forms which plant 'sweet love in gentle hearts'. They have just fatally finished reading a luxuriant account how 'Launcelot was thrall'd in love'. The incident is taken from the 5th Canto of Dante's Inferno, shewing the dreadful effect of licentious books. - 'Perish the volumes and the writers both! - Insidious Panders!'[62]

The fact that Oliver's picture appeared at the Academy is overlooked by Toynbee. She does, however, note its appearance at the British Institution the following

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[60] Rimini, x-xi. The reference appears in 'The Nun's Priest's Tale'.

[61] Quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 259.

[62] 'Royal Academy Exhibition', The Examiner (18 Jun. 1809), 398-9.

year.[63] According to her records, this is the fifth representation of the subject in British Art, and the last to have appeared prior to the Story of Rimini (which was itself denounced for its 'luxuriant paragraph[s]' and 'indecent and immoral tendency').[64] A further translation of the Inferno, by Joseph Hume, appeared in 1812, although this made little impact and is deemed by Toynbee to be 'the worst translation of any portion of Dante's works'.[65] Cary's complete Commedia (1814) also encountered initial indifference. However, its fortunes would improve, owing, in part at least, to Hunt's poem, which Ralph Pite identifies as the probable source of Keats' introduction to Dante (it was, of course, the 'minute volumes of carey' that accompanied Keats on his northern tour in 1818).[66] The Story of Rimini certainly inspired the next representation of the episode; an oil painting of Francesca exhibited at the British Institution in 1817. According to Robert Hunt, who reviewed the exhibition for the Examiner (23 February), Mrs [Mary Anne] Ansley's Francesca had 'a very pleasing expression of feminine gentleness, and a fixed, studious air', whilst her use of colour was found to be 'rich and forcible, with beautiful tints and gradations'.[67] In keeping with the 'original' and innovative nature of her source, Ansley's picture seems to be the first to feature just one of the lovers. It is also indicative of the general preference for portraying the story contained within Dante's 'famous episode', rather than the scene itself. As Hunt would explain in his Autobiography, the poem published in 1816 followed 'a design altogether different in its pretensions' to the encounter upon which it 'enlarged'. The 'substance' of this

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[63] Britain's Tribute to Dante, 45.

[64] See 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. II', Blackwood's (Nov. 1817), 194, 198.

[65] Dante in English Literature, II, 80.

[66] The Circle of Our Vision, Dante's Presence in English Romantic Poetry (Oxford, 1994), 1, 119, and Keats' letter to Benjamin Bailey (10 Jun. 1818), Letters of John Keats, ed. Robert Gittings (Oxford, 1970), 100.

[67] 'British Institution', 126.

appeared 'at the end of the third Canto'; 'the rest', as we shall see, was 'gathered from the commentators'.[68]

'A picture of sunny luxuriance overclouded'

Writing to Henry Brougham on 26 September 1815, Hunt noted that the Story of Rimini - of which Brougham was 'the oldest acquaintance' - was near completion and expected 'to be out in the ensuing season'.[69] He had written 'the greater part' of this poem in Surrey Jail, whilst serving a two-year sentence for libelling the Prince Regent in an article for the Examiner (22 March 1812). One of his abiding memories of that time was of 'the comfort [he] enjoyed in painting' what he would later refer to as 'a picture...of sunny luxuriance overclouded'.[70] This is clear from the opening paragraph of the third Canto, in which the story of Paulo and Francesca turns from 'a dream of bliss' to the waking reality of 'cold sorrow' and a 'Fatal Passion'. Here, Hunt interrupted his own 'leafy dreams' of 'things far hence' to allow the reader a brief, yet timely, glimpse of the oppressive conditions in which he was working:[71]

> Now...while rains autumnal, as I sing,
> Wash the dull bars, chilling my sicklied wing,
> And all the climate presses on my sense;
> ...thoughts it furnishes of things far hence,
> And leafy dreams affords me, and a feeling

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[68] See ALH, II, 170, 173, and the 'Argument' of 1832 (quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 128).

[69] Leigh Hunt: A Life in Letters, together with some correspondence of William Hazlitt, ed. Eleanor M. Gates (Essex, Connecticut, 1998), 67.

[70] ALH, II, 170, 173.

[71] Rimini, III, 43.

Which I should else disdain, tear-dipped and healing;[72]

A footnote indicates that 'the preceding canto' was also 'written in prison' (a 'confession' that would be pounced upon by the Quarterly Review).[73] It was there that many of Hunt's friends first became acquainted with the poem. Byron, Thomas Moore and their young admirer John Hamilton Reynolds, for example, were among those who took an early interest in it. Hunt was also congratulated on 'the fruit of [his] prison hours' by Charles and Mary Lamb, who wrote to him on 24 March 1816, having received a copy of the volume which they had previously read 'with great delight'.[74] The 'sad...strain' with which Hunt cheered his 'long...caged hours' had, however, been taken up 'a year or two before' his imprisonment, and with a very different 'first design' in mind. In his Autobiography (1850), he explained that he had begun the Story of Rimini 'while...visiting the sea-coast at Hastings, with [his] wife and [their] first child', after 'looking among [his] books for some melancholy theme of verse, by which [he] could steady [his] felicity'.[75]

The holiday in Hastings - which Hunt came to regard as 'one of the happiest periods of [his] life' - appears to have taken place at the beginning of November 1811 (in the leading article for the Examiner of 3 November, Hunt noted that he was 'at some distance from town...and not in the way of seeing publications of any sort beyond a cursory glance').[76] It would seem that he was then 'in a state of perfect comfort and enjoyment' similar to that which he had experienced some three or four

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[72] Rimini, III, 43-4.

[73] 'The Story of Rimini, a Poem, by Leigh Hunt' (attributed to John Wilson Croker and William Gifford) dated Jan. 1816, issued May 1816.

[74] The Letters of Charles Lamb, to which are added those of his sister Mary Lamb, ed. E. V. Lucas, 3 vols. (London, 1935), II, 186.

[75] ALH, II, 170.

[76] 'Irishmen in the Service of France', Examiner, 699 and Hunt's Preface to the 1832 edition of his Poetical Works.

years earlier. As he recalled in his Autobiography, the previous 'delightful' interval followed the initial, prolonged attack of an illness that was to trouble him throughout the poem's composition:

> I was...the gayer for the cloud which had gone, though occasionally looking back on it with gravity, and prepared, alas! or rather preparing myself by degrees to undergo it again in the course of a few years by relapsing into a sedentary life...However, the time was very delightful while it lasted. I thoroughly enjoyed my books, my walks, my companions, my verses; and I had never ceased to be ready to fall in love with the first tender-hearted damsel that should encourage me.[77]

Hunt's account of the enjoyment which attended his recovery looks back to the period in which Juvenilia (1801) was published. 'For some time after I left school', he states, 'I did nothing but visit my school fellows, haunt the book-stalls, and write verses'. It was at around that time that he and Thomas Barnes began to learn Italian. 'Anybody not within the pale of the enthusiastic', Hunt recalls, 'might have thought us mad, as we went shouting the beginning of Metastasio's ode to Venus, as loud as we could bawl, over the Hornsey-fields' (Metastasio, incidentally, was another poet to whom William Parsons paid tribute in the Florence Miscellany).[78] He goes on to explain that his study of Italian had commenced at the British Museum, Juvenilia having 'made [him] acquainted' with the assistant keeper of manuscripts, Thomas Maurice.[79] It was presumably in this 'world of books of reference', as he later described it, that Hunt began amassing the 'mighty extent of information' which he was to use in writing the Story of Rimini.[80]

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[77] ALH, I, 311-2.

[78] Ibid. I, 180-1, 185.

[79] Ibid. I, 200-5.

[80] See the prefaces to both Stories from the Italian Poets, I, xvi and Rimini, xii.

When considering the various existing accounts of the Paulo and Francesca episode for the Appendix to Stories from the Italian Poets (1846), Hunt stressed that anyone 'anxious to speak nothing but the truth' should 'not...think that he has seen all the authorities on the subject...until he has searched every corner of his library and his memory'.[81] According to his eldest son Thornton, Hunt had been equally thorough in his approach to learning Italian. 'He was not content with the common superficial way of getting at a foreign language', he explained, 'but searched out its niceties, and anxiously consulted living as well as printed authorities'. By way of illustration, Thornton pointed to a letter that his father had written to Rowland Hunter in January 1805. In it Hunt sought the assistance of a Mr Damiani with an 'Essay on Heroi-Comic Poetry', in which he had 'ventured to insert a sort of memoir and criticism' on Tassoni's La Secchia Rapita.[82] This is, of course, one of the works that Hunt mentions in his Preface to the Story of Rimini, Tassoni having been amongst those who alluded to the 'little piece of private history' behind 'Dante's famous episode'.[83] A letter to Marianne dated 30 May 1809 contains an interesting reference to the Divine Comedy itself:

> The greatest punishment that I ever heard invented for souls that dislike each other is a most tremendous one in Dante, who makes two souls perpetually united in the other world and perpetually struggling to be free: - now the reverse of this is the happiness of those who love each other, they delight to be perpetually united, and if they perpetually struggle, it is only to bind themselves faster.[84]

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[81] Stories from the Italian Poets, I, 399-400.

[82] Correspondence, I, 14-15.

[83] Rimini, ix-x. ALH, II, 170.

[84] In: Luther A. Brewer, My Leigh Hunt Library, The Holograph Letters (Iowa, 1938), 42.

In reading this, one is reminded of the letter in which Keats tells his brother and sister-in-law about a dream that he had whilst suffering from 'rather a low state of mind' (14 February - 3 May 1819). This dream - upon which he had written a sonnet - was apparently inspired by his growing appreciation of Dante's version of the 'Paulo and Francesca' story. It was, he states, 'one of the most delightful enjoyments I ever had in my life':

> I floated about the whirling atmosphere as it is described with a beautiful figure to whose lips mine were joined [as] it seem'd for an age - and in the midst of all this cold and darkness I was warm - even flowery tree tops sprung up and we rested on them sometimes with the lightness of a cloud till the wind blew us away again.[85]

For the reviewer of Bruce Whyte's Histoire des Langues Romanes, writing in 1841, the 'lone devotedness' of the 'eternally-united pair' was one of the most poignant aspects of the episode. The admiration expressed here echoes that voiced by Carlyle in his lecture on the 'The Hero as Poet' the previous year. Describing the passage concerning 'Francesca and her Lover' as 'a thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black', Carlyle had remarked on 'how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that *he* [Paulo] will never part from her'.[86] The image of the rainbows is reminiscent of Hunt's likening of the episode to 'a lily in the mouth of Tartarus' in the 1832 edition of his Poetical Works.[87] This, together with his comments regarding 'the happiness of those who love each other' in the letter of 1809, gives some insight into why, two years later, he should have been struck by this particular 'melancholy'

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[85] Letters of John Keats, 239-40 and 'A Dream, after reading Dante's Episode of Paulo and Francesca'.

[86] 'Art. VIII', Foreign Quarterly Review (Oct. 1841) and Carlyle's lecture quoted from Dante in English Literature, II, 503, 664-5.

[87] See the 'Argument' preceding The Story of Rimini, lxiii.

passage when looking for a means of 'steady[ing his] felicity'.[88]

It is not clear from the Autobiography if Hunt made any progress beyond deciding upon the subject of his poem whilst at Hastings. In his prison 'Memorandum' for 16 March 1813, he referred to the Story of Rimini as 'a poem, which I began last summer'.[89] However, the allusion to it in the Reflector (23 March 1812) confirms that he had, at the very least, begun drawing up plans long before that.[90] It may be that Hunt's visit to the coast in 1811 had some influence on the opening depiction of Ravenna (if only in adding to his 'stock of ideas' as the following summer spent at Taunton would).[91] According to Byron, who went to Ravenna in July 1819 - partly, by way of keeping a promise made to Hunt three years earlier - the poet made 'a sad mistake' in referring to its 'clear-shewn towers and bay'. 'The city lies so low that you must be close upon it before it is "shewn" at all', he noted in a letter to Lady Byron (20 July 1819), 'and the Sea had retired *four miles* at least, long before Francesca was born - and as far back as the Exarchs and Emperors'. Commenting on Hunt's error again in a letter to John Cam Hobhouse (30 July 1819), he added that 'there is no comprehensive view unless you climb the steeple'.[92] Byron's observations are borne out by the following passage in William Gilpin's Remarks on Forest Scenery (1791):

> ...though the town of Ravenna, in [Misson's] day, stood a league from the

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[88] ALH, II, 170.

[89] Correspondence, I, 79.

[90] Clarice Short points out that 'though none of the rough drafts contain an outline of [the poem] as a whole, the manuscripts supply evidence that, at the time they were written, Hunt had the total structure in mind', 'The Composition of Hunt's *The Story of Rimini*', Keats-Shelley Journal 21-2 (1972-3), 208.

[91] See his letter to Marianne of [26 Aug. 1812], Brewer, 54.

[92] In addition, see the letters to Moore (11 Apr. 1817), Hobhouse (14 Apr. 1817) and Teresa Guiccioli (3 May 1819), BLJ, V, 211, 214, and VI, 122, 181-2, 189.

> Adriatic;...it is an undoubted fact, that the sea formerly washed its walls, and that the present Ravenna occupies the site of the ancient Ravenna, which...was one of the best ports the Romans had on the Adriatic.[93]

As we shall see, Gilpin's work was among those which Hunt consulted whilst in prison. If he did indeed finish reading it, as was his intention, he would surely have been interested in the reference to Ravenna, which occurs towards the end of the first Book.[94] This is assuming that he had not already seen the original source. The 'standard "Handbook" for Italy' long after its publication in 1691, Misson's Nouveau Voyage (or one of the volumes in which it appeared) may have been among the 'out-of-the-way books on Italy' that Henry Brougham had 'caused...to be looked out in Westminster' in the summer of 1812. Like Byron after him, his purpose in doing this had been to send Hunt notes of any information that they contained regarding Ravenna.[95]

Brougham, who conducted the Hunts' defence in the libel case of 1812 (as he had done on a previous occasion), represents another link in the chain of handshakes connecting Hunt to the Della Cruscans. Brougham had spent the latter part of 1804 travelling through Holland, Germany and Italy. Having left London at the beginning of August, he reached Vicenza on 6 October. There, he found 'a very pleasant English Society...all persons on their parole, taken in France and in the Ital[ian] Repub[lic]'. Among them were 'the Greatheads', to whom he apparently wrote immediately on his

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[93] Remarks on Forest Scenery, and other Woodland Views, By the late William Gilpin, AM, ed. Thomas Dick Lauder, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, London and Dublin, 1834), I, 222-3, citing Francis Maximilian Misson's Nouveau Voyage d'Italie (1691).

[94] See his prison 'Memorandum' for 17 March 1813, Correspondence, I, 81.

[95] See his letter to Hunt, marked 'York, Thursday [1812]', Ibid. I, 56-7. Misson's work (translated into English in 1695) formed part of John Harris's Navigantium atque Itineranbtium Bibliotheca (1705) and The World Displayed (1774), DNB, XXXVIII (1894), 52-3.

arrival. His reference to the death of their son in a letter to James Loch confirms that these were the Greatheeds of the Florence Miscellany (and not, as the biographical notes in the Appendix to the letters suggest, the lifeboat inventor Henry Greathead).[96] They had been in Italy since August, having been granted permission to leave Paris on 22 September 1803 (the initial period of their parole was spent in Germany). As Brougham reported, the younger Bertie died at Vicenza on 8 October 1804.[97] Thereafter 'the whole became dull and sorrowful' and 'my business not being to weep, but enjoy myself', he explained, 'I left...and went to Padua, where I had some inquiries to make and books to procure'.[98]

There is no mention of Ravenna in either the letter to Loch or Brougham's Memoirs (1871). It is therefore impossible to say for certain whether the journal to which Hunt referred in his letter to Brougham of 16 July 1812 related to the tour of 1804 or to the more recent inquiries that the lawyer had been making on his behalf.[99] Clearly, the poet was aware of Brougham's time in Italy. Writing to him again on 10 August he remarked that he had 'envied [his] whirl to the north, with [his] Italian and poetical *recollections* [my italics]'. It would be another month before Hunt received the anticipated 'packets about Ravenna' - 'with some of the contents of which [he] was already acquainted, with others not'.[100] A letter posted at York indicates that whilst Brougham had prepared some notes prior to requesting the books at Westminster, he had been 'prevented from sending [them] by law business, and the

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96 See letter marked 'Adriatic - off Omago in Istria, 1804', Brougham and his Early Friends: Letters to James Loch 1798-1809, ed. R. H. M. Buddle Atkinson and G. A. Jackson, 3 vols. (London, 1908), II, 178, and III, 255. Also, the extracts from his tour journal in Memoirs of the Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham, written by Himself, 3 vols. (Edinburgh and London, 1871), I, 271, 291.

97 See An Englishman in Paris, ix, xvii, 179-87 and DNB XXIII (1890), 32.

98 Letters to James Loch, II, 178-9.

99 Correspondence, I, 58.

100 Ibid. 59, 61. The second letter dated 27 Sept. 1812.

correspondence arising out of the Orders in Council'.[101] Nevertheless, work on the first Canto of the Story of Rimini was by now well under way. In the letter of 16 July Hunt had explained that he was hoping to hear of the 'promised manuscript', 'as [he] might then be enabled to settle some local points in the exordium' which had 'hitherto left some...passages gaping for information'. 'If, however, you are too busy just now, or have left your journal behind you', he continued, 'I will make such extracts as I can; and take an opportunity, at the same time, of explaining to you what views I have with respect to the versification'. Brougham was providing Hunt with information and advice on a number of projects (both poetical and editorial) at this time. However, the poet's subsequent comment regarding the 'intelligence from Ravenna' and the fact that his friend should 'first witness [his] wants on that head with [his] own eyes', in the letter of 10 August, would suggest that he was referring to the Story of Rimini.[102]

It was the 'unexpected' return of his 'old nervous disorder' that had prevented Hunt from forwarding the extracts promised in the earlier letter. Although 'it was by no means so bad...as what assaulted me some years since', he explained, 'it almost incapacitated me...and I have scarcely taken up a pen for these two or three weeks, except when it was absolutely forced into my hands by my editorial duties' (he was 'at length compelled to leave' the next issue of the Examiner 'without the usual articles').[103] Previous attacks of this 'disorder' had led Hunt to seek respite from 'the "stir and smoke of this dim spot, which men call" London', as he termed it in the letter to Brougham.[104] His 'first illness' (1805-6) had taken him to Gainsborough, where he had stayed with the 'young and amiable artist' Charles Robertson.[105] Two years later,

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[101] Correspondence, I, 56-7.

[102] Ibid. I, 58-9.

[103] Ibid. See the apology printed on the first page. Similar notices appeared on 6 Sept. and 4 Oct.

[104] 10 August 1812, Ibid. I, 58-9.

[105] ALH, I, 300. Ibid. I, 17-24.

he visited an old school friend in Nottinghamshire, spending one night at a village in Sherwood Forest (which, Michael Eberle-Sinatra points out, 'the setting of Rimini could easily bring to mind').[106] According to Thornton, a visit to Oxford and Cambridge at the beginning of January 1811 was also paid 'in obedience to medical advice'. Upon arriving at Trinity College, Hunt had 'worshipped as in duty bound' the portraits of renowned former students. These included Dryden - then 'the most delightful name to [him] in English poetry' - and Francis Bacon, both of whom are cited in the Preface to the Story of Rimini (the former, for his mastery in 'modern versification', the latter for having provided the simile of 'unfortunate poets' and 'crushed perfumes' in the fourth Canto).[107] Evidently, the renewed 'assault' proved worse than Hunt first thought. By the end of August 1812, the poet was again out of town. This time, his destination was Taunton, home of the Marriotts, to whom his brother John was related by marriage. The journey through Wells and Glastonbury would presumably have afforded Hunt ample opportunity of adding to the 'stores' which he kept in reserve for his poems. His subsequent strolls into the 'beautiful, woody scenery' around Taunton itself may also have provided him with ideas for the woodland scenes in the second and third Cantos of the Story of Rimini, in particular.[108] Although 'still...unwell', as a note in the Examiner for 6 September 1812 indicated, Hunt evidently intended to continue working on the poem following his return to London.[109] It appears that he had already sent Brougham part of the 'Introduction' prior to receiving the notes on Ravenna. Thanking him for these on 27 September, Hunt promised to send 'some more of the poem' as soon as he had

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[106] Ibid. 29, 34-5, and 'From Dante to the Romantics: The Reception History of Leigh Hunt's The Story of Rimini', The Charles Lamb Bulletin (October 2001), 124.

[107] See Correspondence, I, 47-51, ALH, II, 170 and Rimini, xiii-xiv, IV, 82-3.

[108] See letters to Marianne dated 25, [26] and 29 Aug.1812, Brewer, 51-5, and the reference to 'a poem I've be me' in Feast of the Poets (echoed in the letter of [26] Aug.), 2.

[109] Examiner, 561.

'pleased [him]self with one or two necessary alterations'.[110] A subsequent letter (dated [3 October 1812] in the Correspondence, although it may have been written a little before this), in which he sought Brougham's opinion of Horace's odes, shows that it remained a priority. 'I have an idea of endeavouring to give a course of samples...one ode for each humour, - before I conclude my weekly verses', he stated, 'but not if it interferes with the progress of *Rimini*'.[111]

The verses to which Hunt refers in this letter were a series of short translations - many of them from Catullus - printed in the Examiner (a number of them were later published with the Feast of the Poets). In his letter to Brougham of 10 August 1812, Hunt explained that they were originally 'made as studies, to familiarize [him] with the niceties and fitnesses of expression'.[112] As such, they may be viewed as having contributed to the writing of the Story of Rimini (and in fact Hunt names both Horace and Catullus in the course of his 'observations' on the subject of versification in his Preface).[113] A significant part of Hunt's correspondence with Brougham was given over to the discussion of these 'regular weekly translations'. On at least one occasion, Brougham suggested a passage for Hunt to 'try' (Martial's 'Arria and Paetus'). He also offered criticism and sought out information, as he did with the Story of Rimini iself. A letter written at (or just before) the beginning of October 1812, for example, reveals that he wrote to William Roscoe regarding a number of 'points' in Catullus' 'Acme and Septimius'. Hunt had drawn Brougham's attention to his translation of this 'delicious little poem' in the letter of 10 August, though it did not appear in the Examiner until 13 September.[114] Subsequent issues featured 'The Return Home of Catullus' (20 September), Horace's 'Ode to Pyrrha' (27 September) and 'Catullus to Cornificius' (4 October). The latter - in which the poet, 'suffering under some heavy depression of

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[110] Correspondence, I, 59-61.

[111] Ibid. 64-5.

[112] Ibid. I, 58.

[113] Rimini, xvii-xviii.

[114] Correspondence, I, 58-65.

spirits', seeks the 'society and conversation of a friend' - coincided with a notice explaining that Hunt was 'now recovering from a severe fit of illness' and was therefore 'not quite prepared...for the present week'.[115] In the grip of his 'old nervous disorder', and facing the threat of imprisonment (to which he appears to allude in the letter of [3 October]), Hunt may well have identified with Catullus.[116] The same may be said of his next translation. Printed on the anniversary of the holiday at Hastings (1 November 1812), Hunt's introduction to Horace's ode 'To Maecenas' is suggestive of the spirit in which he had begun the Story of Rimini:

> In the Ode [to Pyrrha], which appeared a week or two since, an attempt was made to present Horace to the English reader in his character of an unhappy lover. - in the following, we see him as a happy one, and as this brighter side of the picture was more congenial to his powers, he here exhibits, without any mixture of metaphor, those natural touches of feeling and *human* manner, as opposed to every other species of mannerism, which are the same in all ages, and strike us as freshly and forcibly at the distance of two thousand years, as the painting of yesterday. The present piece is also an instance of that natural but powerful contrast with which his lighter sketches of enjoyment so much abound, and which a reader of taste is so quick to discover, - I mean his commencing an Ode with political or warlike allusions, which, under pretence of deprecating such grave or mighty subjects, form a piece of deep-toned colouring, and throw out his subsequent sprightliness with a most agreeable brilliancy.[117]

His remarks on 'those natural touches of feeling and *human* manner' bring to mind Fuseli's explanation of the 'assimilating power' of subjects including 'the Paulo and

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115 Examiner (4 Oct. 1812), 625, 634-5.

116 Correspondence, I, 58, 66.

117 'To Maecenus. Ode XII. Book II', Examiner, 697.

Francesca of Dante' in one of his lectures at the Royal Academy (1820). 'Without names, without reference to time and place', he stated, 'they would impress with equal energy, because they find their counterpart in every breast, and speak the language of mankind'.[118] This, in turn, takes us back to Hunt's letter to Marianne of 30 May 1809 (in which he was himself seen 'in his character' of a happy lover) and the question of his reasons for selecting Dante's 'famous episode'. Hunt's description of Horace's ode as though it were a painting prefigures both the account given of the Story of Rimini in his Autobiography and the contemporary responses to the procession described in the first Canto in particular.[119] It may be that his comments on the ode reflect, to some extent, his own intentions regarding the poem on which he was working when he began the 'course of samples' from Horace.

For all his apparent optimism in the letters to Brougham of late September-early October 1812, however, it would seem that Hunt was no longer making progress with the Story of Rimini by the time the ode 'To Maecenas' appeared. The recovery announced in the Examiner for 4 October was by no means complete; when Hunt entered Surrey Jail on 3 February 1813 he was again in a poor state of health.[120] It was there that he resumed the poem, citing its completion as one of the 'two main objects' that he had in view. The other was 'the acquirement of a full and proper knowledge of what a journalist, of [his] description, ought...to know...of history and legislation'. It was also his intention to follow 'a course of epic poetry from Homer to Virgil, and...through the Italian school to the English', which would enable him to 'restore' his Greek and get 'a fuller mastery of [his] Italian'.[121] The footnote at the beginning of the third Canto of the Story of Rimini simply states that Hunt had written 'a small part' of this and the whole of the 'preceding canto' whilst in prison.

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[118] Fuseli's quoted from Dante in English Literature, I, 429.

[119] ALH, II, 160-73.

[120] Thornton notes that he had been 'recalled from one of his visits to the country in order to receive sentence', Correspondence, I, 69-70, 73.

[121] See his prison 'Memorandum' for 16 Mar. 1813, Ibid. I, 78-9.

However, his journal reveals that he was in fact part way through the first when he took it up again. By 17 March 1813 he had written the following passage (as it appears in the published version) and inserted 'one or two previous lines which were wanting':[122]

> Never was nobler finish of fine sight;
> 'Twas like the coming of a shape of light;
> And every lovely gazer, with a start,
> Felt the quick pleasure smite across her heart:-
> The princess, who at first could scarcely see,
> Through looking still that way from dignity,
> Gathers new courage as the praise goes round,
> And bends her eyes to learn what they have found.
> And see, - his horse obeys the check unseen;
> And with an air 'twixt ardent and serene,
> Letting a fall of curls about his brow,
> He takes his cap off with a gallant bow;
> Then for another and a deafening shout;
> And scarfs are waved, and flowers come fluttering out;
> And, shaken by the noise, the reeling air
> Sweeps with a giddy whirl among the fair,
> And whisk their garments, and their shining hair.[123]

'I had left it standing at the conclusion of the preceding paragraph for six months, without being able to touch it', he explained:

> Poetry is very trying work, if your heart and spirits are in it, particularly with a

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[122] Correspondence, I, 81.

[123] Rimini, I, 18-19.

> weak body. The concentration of your faculties, and the necessity and ambition you feel to extract all the essential heat of your thoughts, seem to make up that powerful and exhausting effect called inspiration. The ability to sustain this, as well as all other exercises of the spirit, will evidently depend, in some measure, upon the state of your frame.[124]

This would indicate that he had put the poem aside upon his return from Taunton. He was certainly then very weak. In the letter to Brougham of 27 September 1812, Hunt had stated that 'he was only now gaining strength by slow degrees...after having been reduced to skin and bone'. Although this, and the subsequent letter, suggest that he was still working on the poem at that time, it is possible that the 'one or two' lines mentioned in his prison journal were amongst the 'necessary alterations' that he had hoped to make before sending Brougham more extracts.[125]

The manner in which Hunt introduced the account of what he had written since entering prison in his journal for 17 March 1813, implies that he would have preferred to have achieved more than 'a solitary paragraph' of his poem in that time. This is by no means a true reflection of his progress, however; he had evidently done much in the way of research. Within the 'strange medley' of works that Hunt recorded having either 'read through' or 'looked into' are several that are of relevance to the Story of Rimini.[126] The most obvious are Richard Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762), 'Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem', George Ellis' Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances (1805) and, of course, Gilpin's Remarks on Forest Scenery (1791). Hurd's 'vindication' of the so-called 'Fairy way of writing' against the criticism of 'the exact, but cold BOILEAU' and the 'French wits' generally, brings to mind Hunt's own comments on the 'French school' in both his 'Young Poets' article (Examiner of 1 December 1816) and the Preface to Foliage (1818). The starting point

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[124] Correspondence, I, 81.

[125] Ibid. I, 60-1, 65.

[126] Ibid. I, 80-1.

for Hurd's argument is the influence of the 'Gothic fables of Chivalry' upon such great geniuses as 'ARIOSTO and TASSO in *Italy* ' and 'SPENSER and MILTON in *England* '.[127] He also considers Chaucer's ridicule of the old Romances, something to which Hunt himself referred in his Preface to The Story of Rimini. The works of Spenser and Milton had accompanied Hunt on many a walk in the weeks prior to his imprisonment, and his journal for 17 March indicates that he was then 'annotating' them 'in refreshing intervals' (he had already looked at Hoole's 'miserable' attempt at Ariosto and would 'warn any reader of taste against trusting it'). Nevertheless, Hunt dismissed Hurd's Letters as 'a work of much pretence and little performance'. The notes to Scott's edition of 'Sir Tristrem' were also found to contain 'nothing new'. The 'best part of it', Hunt stated, is 'Mr. Scott's own conclusion'.[128] Tristan (or, Tristram) it should be remembered, appears in the fifth Canto of the Inferno, his being the last of the souls named by Dante, prior to the arrival of Paulo and Francesca. In her article on the composition of the Story of Rimini, Short points out that Hunt's version of their fate is 'an analogue to that of Tristram and Iseult in that the emissary and the lady fell victim to an irresistible passion which leads to their unhappiness and early death'.[129]

Scott's 'Sir Tristram' is one of the works mentioned in the 'Historical Introduction' prefixed to Ellis' Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances.[130] At the end of the volume is a section on 'Romances Relating to Arthur', which consists of abstracts of Merlin (I-II) and Morte Arthur. These are almost certainly

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127 The Works of Richard Hurd, D. D., Lord Bishop of Worcester, 8 vols. (London, 1811), IV. See, in particular, Letters: i, 239; vii, 291-2; viii, 278-306; ix, 309-14; x, 316-331 and xi, 335-41.

128 Correspondence, I, 78, 80-1 and Rimini, xi, xvii.

129 Inferno, V, 67. Short, 208.

130 George Ellis, Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, Chiefly written during the early part of the fourteenth century; to which is prefixed An Historical Introduction, intended to illustrate the rise and progress of Romantic Composition in France and England, 3 vols. (London and Edinburgh, 1805), I, 122.

the two abstracts to which Hunt referred in his journal (the manuscript was found to be illegible at this point) and which he described as having been 'done with [Mr. Ellis'] usual pleasant gentlemanly facility'.[131] With regard to the Story of Rimini, Morte Arthur is the more relevant of the two. As Ellis explained in his introduction, it was believed to be a translation from a French prose romance, 'forming, in the printed copies of the romance of Lancelot du Lac, the fifth and last part of that story'.[132] Lancelot du Lac is, of course, the infamous 'Galeotto' of the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode. Furthermore, the 'panegyric pronounced over Launcelot' at the close of Morte Arthur was Hunt's source for 'Giovanni's praise of his dead brother' in the following passage from his fourth Canto:

> But there, meantime, my brother, liest thou;
> And, Paulo, thou wert the completest knight,
> That ever rode with banner to the fight;
> And thou wert the most beautiful to see,
> That ever came in press of chivalry;
> And of a sinful man, thou wert the best,
> That ever for his friend put spear in rest;
> And thou wert the most meek and cordial,
> That ever among ladies eat in hall;
> And thou wert still, for all that bosom gored,
> The kindest man, that ever struck with sword.[133]

Acknowledging the debt in his Preface, Hunt pointed out that 'the reader may find [the panegyric] in Ellis's Specimens of Early Romances'.[134] He referred to the speech of

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131 Correspondence, I, 80.

132 Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, I, 327-8.

133 Rimini, xiii, IV, 99-100.

134 Ibid. xiii.

Sir Bohort, which appears at the close of the first volume:

> And now I dare say - that, Sir Lancelot, ther thou lyest, thou were never matched of none earthly knight's hands. And thou were the curtiest knight that ever bare shielde. And thou were the truest freende to thy lover that ever bestrode horse, and thou were the truest lover, of a synful man, that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever stroke with swerde. And thou were the godliest person that ever came amonge prece (press) of knyghtes. And thou were the meekest man and the gentillest that ever eate in hal among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spere in rest.[135]

Unlike the rest of Ellis' 'specimen' of Morte Arthur, this particular passage is taken from Sir Thomas Malory's 'prose compilation' (Le Morte D'Arthur, completed, 1470, printed, 1485). The reason given for this, is that 'the lamentations which attended [the] melancholy events' of Lancelot's death and burial in 'the metrical copy' were deemed to be 'rather insipid'.[136]

As we have seen, Gilpin's Remarks is another of the works to which Hunt was conscious of a 'direct obligation' when he came to write his Preface to the Story of Rimini. Though, 'perhaps, after all', he reflected, 'I have not handled [them] well enough to make [them] worth the acknowledgement'.[137] The simile that Hunt borrowed from Gilpin appears towards the end of the second Canto of the poem, during his account of Francesca's journey from Ravenna:

> Various the trees and passing foliage here, -

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[135] Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, I, 386-7.

[136] Ibid., I, 386. Details for Malory from: Oxford Companion to English Literature, 620, 682-3.

[137] Rimini, xii-xiii.

> Wild pear, and oak, and dusky juniper,
> With briony between in trails of white,
> And ivy, and the suckle's streaky light,
> *And moss, warm gleaming with a sudden mark,*
> *Like flings of sunshine left upon the bark,*
> And still the pine, long-haired, and dark, and tall,
> Is lordly right, predominant o'er all [my italics].[138]

The particular passage upon which Hunt drew occurs early in Book I of the Remarks. It forms part of Gilpin's consideration of the various diseases ascribed to trees by a Mr. Lawson ('a naturalist of the last age'), in a work entitled the Orchard. The last and, in Gilpin's opinion, 'most beautiful' of these is moss. Describing an oak 'thus enriched', he notes:

> We may observe also touches of red; *and sometimes, but rarely, a bright yellow, which is like a gleam of sunshine;* and in many trees you will see one species growing upon another; the knotted brimstone-coloured fringe clinging to a lighter species; or the black softening into red [my italics].[139]

He goes on to consider the depiction of such scenes in works of literature and art:

> Thus the maladies of trees are greatly subservient to the uses of the pencil. The foliage is the dress, and these are the ornaments. Even the poet will sometimes deign to array his tree with these picturesque ornaments...In general however, the poet, is not, like the painter, uniform in his admiration of these pleasing appendages. If at one time he admires them with the painter, and ranks them among the picturesque beauties of Nature; at another he sides

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138 Rimini, II, 36.

139 Remarks, I, 49.

with the woodman, and brushes them away.[140]

This approach is typical of the Remarks as a whole which reads very much like a 'handbook' for the painter of forest scenery. Indeed, Gilpin's writing on the subject of the picturesque (in this and other works) is recognised as having been 'extremely influential across the fields of literature, art, and landscape gardening'.[141] As his comments on the poem in his Autobiography illustrate, Hunt was only too happy to 'side with' the painter in the composition of the Story of Rimini . Whilst he acknowledged only 'the simile of the patches of moss to sunshine', his debt to Gilpin generally is clearly much greater than this. Among the 'pleasing appendages' to which Gilpin turns his attention following his discussion of the 'variety of mosses' are ivy, 'black and white brionies' and 'the wild honeysuckle'.[142] It is surely no coincidence that these feature alongside the patches of moss in Hunt's poem. His description of the road along which Francesca travels upon leaving Ravenna is another passage in which the influence of the Remarks may be traced:

Warm, but not dim, a glow was in the air;
The softened breeze came smoothing here and there;
And every tree, in passing, one by one,
Gleamed out with twinkles of the golden sun:
For leafy was the road, with tall array,
On either side, of mulberry and bay,
And distant snatches of blue hills between;
And there the alder was with its bright green,
And the broad chestnut, and the poplar's shoot,

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[140] Remarks, I, 51-3.

[141] Quoted from Clara Tuite's entry on Gilpin in An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age, 523-4. See also Oxford Companion to English Literature, 398.

[142] Remarks, I, 51, 54-56.

That like a feather waves from head to foot,
With, ever and anon, majestic pines;
And still from tree to tree the early vines
Hung garlanding the way in amber lines.[143]

'Under warm suns, where vines are the offspring of Nature', Gilpin states, 'nothing can be more beautiful than the forest tree, adorned with their twisting branches, hanging from bough to bough, and laden with fruit'. On the subject of the 'Poplar tribe' he notes: 'one beauty the Italian poplar possesses, which is almost peculiar to itself...is the waving line it forms, when agitated by wind'.[144]

Hunt had read only part of Gilpin's Remarks when he detailed his recent 'literary pursuits' in his journal for 17 March 1813. It was his intention to finish it, however.[145] The first Book was evidently at his side when he wrote the second Canto of the Story of Rimini. In Book II, Gilpin considered trees 'under their various modes of composition, from the clump to the forest'. Much of the discussion in the intervening sections is concerned with 'park scenery' and the proper ornamentation of the copse, glen and grove.[146] The advice offered here is, therefore, particularly pertinent to Hunt's third Canto, in which he 'painted' the extensive grounds of Giovanni's castle. Reflecting upon the 'pleasing tranquillity' of the grove, Gilpin remarked that 'no species of landscape is so fitted for meditation'. 'The mind, undisturbed, has only to retire within itself', he continued, 'hence the philosopher, the devotee, the poet, all retreated to these quiet recesses; and, - *from the world retired, Conversed with angels and immortal forms* '.[147] Such, one imagines, were the 'Places of nestling green, for poets made' that Hunt had in mind when he described the 'noble

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143 Rimini, II, 32-3.

144 Remarks, I, 57, 115-6.

145 Correspondence, I, 78, 81.

146 Remarks, I, vi, 293-311.

147 Ibid. I, 308.

range' at Rimini.[148] Gilpin goes on to point out that in 'Classic times' groves were the haunts of the gods. Though averse to 'expensive ornament' and 'laboured works of art', it is presumably partly for this reason that he felt that 'a seat, or a temple...may here be a proper ornament':[149]

> I remember meeting with a...scene of this kind, which was very pleasing. The grove extended along the brow of a gentle declivity, and assumed, from that circumstance, a dark close, gloomy appearance in its deeper recesses; though its opening on the lawn was light and airy, and agreeably connected with the ground. In the front of the grove stood a rude temple of Pan; and the lawn being a neat sheep-walk, the whole, though highly-polished, was characteristic, harmonious, and beautiful.[150]

The pavilion in the third Canto of the Story of the Rimini, is similarly introduced by Hunt as 'a beauteous piece of ancient skill', built as 'a temple...to the Nymphs that haunted there of old'.[151] In his Preface, he pointed out that 'part of the description' of those nymphs was borrowed from Poussin's 'exquisite picture of Polyphemus piping on the mountain'.[152] Whilst Poussin provided the inspiration for the carving on the door, it would seem that the actual setting of the temple may well have been influenced by Gilpin.

The line from Thomson's Seasons with which Gilpin concluded his remarks on the restful nature of the grove, brings to mind Hunt's comments in his Autobiography on the Parnaso Italiano. 'This book', he stated, 'aided Spenser himself in filling my English walks with visions of gods and nymphs, - of enchantresses and magicians'.

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[148] Rimini, III, 65, 68.

[149] Remarks, I, 296, 306, 309.

[150] Ibid. I, 308.

[151] Rimini, III, 69-71.

[152] Ibid. xiii.

Hunt had bought the Parnaso (a set of fifty-six volumes, rather than a single book as some of his references to it suggest) whilst in prison. There - as in later years - it was 'truly a lump of sunshine on [his] shelves'.[153] Outside his prison-room was 'a little yard' which the poet made into a garden. He 'used often to think of a passage in [the Parnaso] whle looking at this miniature piece of horticulture: *Mio picciol orto, A me sei vigna, e campo, e selva, e prato* ' ('My little garden, to me thou'rt vineyard, field, and meadow and wood' - from Baldi).[154] For Hunt, this 'little garden' was the equivalent of Francesca's 'accustomed bower', to which she would retreat with her lute and books, 'Trying, as she was used, to leave her cares/Without'.[155] In fine weather, he would go into the garden to work, 'sometimes under an awning'. 'I used to shut my eyes in my armchair', he recalled, 'and affect to think myself hundreds of miles off' (in poor weather, he was able to retire to the artificial 'bower' that he had created by papering the walls of his room 'with a trellis of roses' and colouring the ceiling 'with clouds and sky').[156]

Hunt's account of the garden's progress in a letter to Marianne of 10 May 1813 is reminiscent of the description of the flower-beds in the third Canto of the Story of Rimini. Some of the flowers 'planted' there - including the 'pouting rose', 'lady lily' and daisy - were amongst those of which he had been proudest.[157] In his letter of 29 May, he told her of the recent alterations that he had made to the layout of his room. Since moving into these 'new lodgings' on 16 March 1813 (having previously been placed in 'one of the corner top rooms of the...prison') Hunt had contrived to surround himself with some of the 'comforts' that he had been looking forward to enjoying in the 'little cottage' at West-end, Hampstead the previous autumn:

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153 ALH, II, 149, III, 185. In a letter to Ollier, dated 20 Feb. [1856], Hunt reported that 'all [his] Parnaso Italiano was again sunnily shining on [him]', Gates, 576.

154 ALH, II, 148-9, III, 185.

155 Rimini, III, 71, 72.

156 ALH, II, 148-50.

157 See Rimini, III, 65-6 and Gates, 37.

> All that I have done is to have the shelves that stood over the piano cut a little, and made to fit on the opposite side of the room, over the table, between the windows, but low down. The lower shelf is now fitted with quartos, the upper with a selection of all my favourite poets, and the bust of Homer surmounts them... My brother's picture is also come, and hung over the mantelpiece; and everything looks so new and compact, that what with the books, the bust, and the blinds, I am sure you would quite delight in the change[158]

This too has a parallel in the poem, in that part of the second Canto in which Francesca discovers, to her surprise, that her private room has been 'furnished, like magic, from her own at home'.[159] So 'dramatic' was the transformation brought about by Hunt that the reaction of many of those visiting him in prison for the first time was also one of surprise. Looking back in his Autobiography, Hunt recalled that he 'took a pleasure', whenever a stranger knocked at the door, 'to see him come in and stare about him.' Charles Lamb, for example, had declared that 'there was no such room, except in a fairy-tale'. 'As to my flowers', Hunt continued, 'they were allowed to be perfect. Thomas Moore, who came to see me with Lord Byron, told me he had seen no such hearts-ease'.[160]

It appears, from his letters to Marianne, that Hunt received his first visit from Byron on 20 May 1813, on which occasion he introduced him to the Story of Rimini. In his letter of 25 May, he reported that Byron had been to see him again, this time without Moore.[161] His account of the visit prefigures the Dedication to his poem, in which 'having...vindicated [his] fellow-dignity' by putting on his laurel to address Byron publicly, he would 'take it off again with a still greater regard for those

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158 See his letters to Brougham of 27 Sept. and [3 Oct.] 1812 and his journal entries for 14 and 16 Mar. 1813, Correspondence, I, 60-1, 66, 76, 78, 89.

159 Rimini, II, 52.

160 ALH, II, 148.

161 Gates, 40, 41. See also Byron's note to Moore of 19 May 1813, BLJ, III, 49.

unceremonious and unpretending humanities of private intercourse', of which his friend '[knew] so handsomely how to set the example':[162]

> He came on Sunday by himself, in a very frank, unceremonious manner, & knowing what I wanted for my poem, brought me the last new travels in Italy in 2 quarto volumes, of which he requested my acceptance with the air of one who did not seem to think himself conferring the least obligation...It strikes me that he & I shall become *friends*, - literally and cordially speaking; - there is something in the texture of his mind & feelings, that seems to resemble mine to a thread; I think we are cut out of the same piece, only a different wear may have altered our respective naps a little.[163]

Hunt does not specify whose 'travels in Italy' it was that Byron had brought him (he had abandoned the journal in which he had intended to keep a record of his 'literary pursuits' after 19 March 1813 and there appears to be nothing in his subsequent letters that would confirm their identity).[164] The most recent works on the subject were John Forsyth's Remarks on Antiquities, Arts during An Exursion in Italy during the years 1802 and 1803 and John Chetwode Eustace's Tour Through Italy (known in later editions as A Classical Tour), both of which appeared in London in 1813. Hunt was certainly familiar with Forsyth's work by the time he went to Italy in 1822, citing it in the first of his 'Letters from Abroad'.[165] If he was wanting information on 'the scenery of his poem' (such as Byron would go in search of in July 1819), however, it is the latter of the two works that had the more to offer.[166] Unlike Forsyth, Eustace's tour had taken him through both Ravenna and Rimini. He has little to say

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[162] Dedication (dated 29 Jan. 1816), Rimini, vi.

[163] Gates, 41.

[164] Correspondence, I, 74, 78, 82.

[165] 'Letters from Abroad. Letter I—Pisa', The Liberal I, No. I (15 Oct. 1822), 97-120.

[166] Byron's term, used in his letter to Moore of 11 Apr. 1817, BLJ, IV, 211.

on the subject of Ravenna, other than to note that Dante's remains 'slumber in exile' there.[167] However, he found much that was 'worthy the attention of the traveller' at Rimini. Amongst the features that he highlights, along with the cathedral, palaces and other churches, are a square with a statue and fountain (a fairly typical combination, and one which Hunt would use in his description of Ravenna). He also refers to 'some fragments of marble linings and piers' attesting to 'the ancient magnificence' of the now 'much obstructed' port (an observation which is reminiscent of the comments on Ravenna made by Misson).[168]

In his letter to Marianne of 29 May 1813, Hunt noted that in the interval since Byron's visit with the 'travels', 'people [had] fairly been conspiring against [him] with books'. Among them was the publisher James Cawthorn, to whom Hunt had referred in his letter of 4 May when inquiring if Marianne wished for any books herself.[169] On this occasion, he had sent Hunt a copy of Hobhouse's Travels in Albania and Turkey - a book that he had been 'longing to read'.[170] It may have been through Cawthorn that Hunt acquired the Parnaso Italiano. On 7 June 1813 he wrote that Cawthorn, who was then with him, had kept him 'looking over a catalogue of Italian books, a heap of which' he was going to get for him. Though 'merely for my study for a little while', he explained, 'purchases are not in my dreams at present'. Hunt went on to say that Cawthorn showed 'every readiness' to help him with his poem and had already brought him 'a multitude of authors' that he wished to consult.[171] These remarks follow on from his letter to Marianne of 27 May in which he had explained that, having been shown 'some of the lines' of the 'work...in hand', Cawthorn had actually

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[167] A Classical Tour Through Italy An. MDCCII, 4 vols. 3rd edn. (London, 1815), I, 277, III, 346-7.

[168] Ibid. I, 279-81. See Rimini, I, 7-8 and the reference to Misson in Gilpin's Remarks, I, 222-3.

[169] Gates, 33.

[170] Correspondence, I, 88.

[171] Ibid. I, 90.

'agreed, at his own request, to publish it when finished'. The payment was to depend 'in some degree...upon its success, though not in the first instance'. In the meantime, Cawthorn was 'to furnish [him] with the few little sums which [he] may want by £50 or 60 at a time'. 'I had really no intention of giving him a hint about such a work', Hunt insisted, 'not recollecting at the moment that he published at all, and having views towards another person on that score'. The generosity of his offer led Hunt to suspect that, 'in addition to what he [knew] of [him] in common with the rest of the public', Cawthorn had heard 'something favourable respecting [his] poetical powers' from Byron:

> For you must know, that as I expressed a wish to have an opinion given of the commencement of my poem by any competent critic whom he might happen to know, he mentioned his Lordship, and had apprized him that he was about to shew him such a thing, when the latter in the meantime, not knowing of course who the person was, expressed a wish to Mr. M[oore] to be introduced to me, and the intimacy subsequently prevented the criticism.[172]

Hunt was evidently working on more than one project at this time. However, the references to Byron and the 'catalogue of Italian books', tend to support Thornton's note upon the letter of 7 June 1813, indicating that the poem shown to Cawthorn was the Story of Rimini.[173] When he wrote of the discussion with the publisher, Hunt was apparently 'not altogether so well' as he had been 'a day or two' previously. Nevertheless, he was still confident of achieving his 'main object' in finishing the poem, providing his health did 'but decently hold out'. 'My habits of application have strengthened of late to such a degree as I believe absolutely to petrify the people at the Examiner office', he stated, 'and a little regularity and additional earliness will

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[172] Brewer 77.

[173] Correspondence, I, 90.

be all that I want for my verses'.[174] As it turned out, the proposed publication of the poem by Cawthorn did not go ahead (perhaps because Hunt realised that he would not be able to complete it soon enough after all). Further references to an agreement - regarding a work that was then at the press - occur in Hunt's letters to Marianne of 28 October and 2 November 1813. However, these clearly relate to the revised version of the Feast of the Poets, which Cawthorn published at the beginning of the following year (and in which Hunt's allusion to 'a poem I've by me' was just as relevant as it had been when the piece first appeared in the Reflector for 23 March 1812).[175]

Another project that diverted Hunt from his declared intention of completing the Story of Rimini whilst in prison, was the Descent of Liberty. He began writing the Mask - 'in allusion to' the abdication of Napoleon on 6 April 1814 - during the latter part of April or early May (an ode printed with the Mask had appeared in the Examiner for 17 April).[176] Writing to Charles Cowden Clarke on 17 May 1814, Hunt raised the possibility of its going to press during the course of the following week.[177] However, a subsequent letter to Haydon shows that it was not finished until July. Printing was under way by 10 October, and the Descent of Liberty finally appeared shortly after Hunt's release from prison on 3 February 1815.[178] The publishers, on this occasion, were Gale, Curtis, and Fenner. A letter to Archibald Constable dated 19 August 1816, reveals that in the last days of Hunt's imprisonment an agreement was drawn up with Curtis regarding the publication of the Story of Rimini, for which

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[174] See Brewer 77, and Hunt's journal for 16 Mar. 1813, Correspondence, I, 79.

[175] See Brewer 81, 82 and Feast of the Poets (1814), 2.

[176] See Hunt's letter to Charles Cowden Clarke of 17 May 1814 in: Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, Recollections of Writers (London, 1878), 192.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Gates, 58-9. See Reynolds letter to Dovaston of 10 Oct. 1814, Letters from Lambeth: The Correspondence of the Reynolds Family with John Freeman Milward Dovaston 1808-1815, ed. Joanna Richardson (Suffolk, 1981), 130-1.

he received a sum of £450 in advance. 'I do not know whether his cunning or my ignorance of busi[nes]s was more conspicuous', Hunt stated. 'It was to this pur[pose]: that I should make the Story of Rimini as long as one [of] Walter Scott's poems, by the September following, & receive for [it] a thousand pounds, or 900...the Mask & the [Fe]ast of the Poets being thrown in additionally, "as a *bonus* for *entering* [into]*this agreement*'. As it turned out, the poem was not ready by September, nor was it found to be long enough. Curtis had apparently been 'in the habit' of visiting Hunt on a regular basis to read over 'as far as [he] had written'. However, Hunt was not reminded of the condition until 'the stipulated time was up'. Then 'I was told of it', he explained, '[and] informed that the agreement must be abided by, - that is to say, that I was to resume the copy-right of Rimini, return the £450...& leave them in possession of the copyrights of the Feast & the Mask'. Hunt offered to have the price of the Story of Rimini reduced to 'any sum which two booksellers, unknown to both parties, should mention'. His offer was declined, however, 'and accordingly the agreement *was* abided by'.[179]

Hunt had signalled his intention of concentrating on the Story of Rimini, once his Mask was complete, in the letter to Haydon of July 1814. In it he thanked Haydon for the trouble that he had taken with some books. 'The Convivio of Dante I have long desired to see', he stated, '[and] the commentary of Landino to his great poem [the Divina Commedia] will be very useful'.[180] It appears to have been at around this time that Hunt met John Hamilton Reynolds. Writing to his friend Dovaston on 19 July 1814, Reynolds reported that Hunt would 'publish a Mask in the course of a Month or two, and ha[d] in hand a Poem of some Magnitude'. 'I know of no one', he continued, 'who from his intimacy with the Italian Poets and...own brilliant...Italian Fancy could throw into a Mask so much of its real Poetry, airy sprightliness, delicate wit and fanciful imagery'.[181] Reynolds' remarks anticipate

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[179] See Gates, 77-8, and a letter to Gale and Fenner, of 18 Dec. 1815, in Brewer, 117.

[180] Gates, 59.

[181] Letters from Lambeth, 118.

those made by Byron in a postscript to his letter of 30 October 1815. 'You have 2 excellent points in that poem', he declared, referring to the Story of Rimini, 'originality - & Italianism'.[182] Byron's approval was something to which Hunt referred in his letter to Brougham of 26 September 1815, in which he noted that his 'old nervous illness' was still with him, rendering him 'almost as great a prisoner' as he had been during the last two years:

> You will be pleased to hear that Lord Byron thinks my poem *is* original, & that he has made several pencil-marks in it extremely flattering to me, though I differ with him in one or two points, & wish to be still more original than he thinks I ought to be, - principally in the use of common, idiomatic style. Had I had the enjoyment of your company oftener of late, I should have liked to have known what you thought of the matter.[183]

Byron's letters indicate that he had begun making pencil marks in 'the first pages' of the Story of Rimini by June 1815.[184] When he wrote to Hunt on 7 October, he was looking forward to seeing either him or the remaining Canto - 'if both together so much the better'. The comments to which Hunt referred in the letter to Brougham, were the subject of Byron's letter of 22 October, in which he expressed a belief that the poem would give Hunt 'a very high station'. 'You have excelled yourself - if not all your Contemporaries in the Canto which I have just finished', he declared, urging Hunt to forge ahead with 'the Conclusion'. His expectation of the poem's success appears to have been a contributing factor in Byron's recommendation of his own publisher. Writing to John Murray on 4 November 1815, he insisted that he thought it the '*safest* thing [he] ever engaged in'. Byron had already informed Hunt of Murray's

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[182] BLJ, IV, 326.

[183] Gates, 67. For 'hint about Dryden' see Brougham's letter, marked Tuesday [1812], Correspondence, I, 59.

[184] BLJ, IV, 295.

'willingness to treat with him'.[185] On 8 November, Hunt wrote to the publisher directly, indicating that he should 'be glad to talk with [him] on the subject'.[186] It seems that he had some concerns regarding both the price that he had asked and the apparent withholding from Murray of some of Byron's marginal notes. The latter sought to reassure Hunt on both points in his letter of 29 January in which he returned an extract that he had been sent. As Byron hoped, the Story of Rimini was indeed 'by this time on the verge of publication'.[187] The date of Byron's letter is also the date of the Dedication. Thanking Hunt for this in a letter of 26 February 1816, Byron assured him that he had 'accepted [it] as it was meant as a public compliment & a private kindness'. 'I am only sorry that it may perhaps operate against you', he continued, 'as an inducement & with some a pretext - for attack - on the part of the political and personal enemies of both'. 'Not that this can be of much consequence', he added, 'for in the end the work must be judged by it's merits - & in that respect you are well armed'.[188] As the next section will show, Byron was to be proved right on both counts.

Passing 'the fiery ordeal'

Within a week of Byron's writing to Hunt, the Story of Rimini came under attack. As he had anticipated, the author of the notice printed in the New Monthly Magazine was more concerned with the Dedication than he was with what followed. All that he was prepared to say regarding 'the book itself' was that the subject was 'taken from an episode in Dante; but [was] most miserably expanded in the present version'.[189]

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185 BLJ, IV, 317, 319-20, 331.

186 Gates, 69.

187 BLJ, V, 18-19.

188 Ibid. V, 32.

189 'The Story of Rimini, a poem. By Leigh Hunt', quoted from Reiman, C, II, 729.

As Eberle-Sinatra points out in his article for the Charles Lamb Bulletin, this was the only contemporary review to make no mention of the 'merits' to which Byron had alluded in the letter of 26 February.[190] Even the Blackwood's critics would concede that the poem 'possesse[d] some tolerable passages' (albeit before going on to disparage them).[191] The author of the notice published in March instead took occasion of what he termed a 'very pleasant piece of chit chat' to criticise both Hunt and Byron; the former for the 'easy impudence' and 'ungrammatical vulgarity' of his address, the latter for having 'giv[en] a false character' in sanctioning the poem's publication.[192] In this respect, the New Monthly Magazine differs from both the Quarterly Review and Blackwood's. Whilst both commented on the Dedication, in neither was there any suggestion that Byron had 'give[n] encouragement' to Hunt in his 'scramble over the bounds of birth and education'.[193] Indeed, in the first of the 'Cockney School' essays, published the following year, 'Z' went so far as to describe it as an 'insult...forgotten and despised by the illustrious person whom it most nearly concerned'.[194] His remarks were subsequently challenged by the anonymous author of A Review of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine for October 1817 who claimed to have 'had occasion to know a gentleman who was invited to Mr. Hunt's along with Lord Byron'. 'They were friends', he asserted, 'therefore, by common courtesy, as well as habits of intimacy', Mr. Hunt was empowered' to address him as he did.[195] Of course, such arguments - which only reiterated what was said in the Dedication itself - were unlikely to appease the 'wrath of the Tory critics'.[196] The New Monthly

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190 The Reception History of Leigh Hunt's The Story of Rimini', 129.

191 'Cockney School I' (Oct. 1817), 36.

192 'The Story of Rimini', 729.

193 Ibid., and 'The Story of Rimini, a Poem, by Leigh Hunt', Quarterly Review (May 1816), quoted from Reiman, C, II, 756.

194 'Cockney School I', Blackwood's, (Oct. 1817), 41.

195 A Review of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine Edinburgh, 1817), 32-3.

196 Hunt's term, ALH, II, 172.

reviewer had readily acknowledged that 'there was much friendship between bards of high and low degree' in 'by-gone days'. However, 'even in those times', he insisted, 'the freedom of private intercourse and correspondence never made the commoner forget his distance in public'.[197] To be seen to countenance an address to - in 'Z's' words - 'one of the most nobly-born English Patricians' by an 'under-bred' and 'paltry cockney newspaper scribbler' would, therefore, be setting a dangerous precedent. Far better to plant 'a feeling of utter loathing and disgust in the public mind, which [would] always be remembered whenever the name of Leigh Hunt was mentioned'.[198]

The fact that the Story of Rimini had reached a second edition by the time 'Z's' essay appeared (with a third following in 1819), would in itself suggest that the Dedication had not excited the reaction he describes. The author of a notice published in the Augustan Review two months after that in the New Monthly had also admitted having thought the opening address 'rather arrogant'. However, in this instance, it was done at the end of the notice and with the intention of paying Hunt a compliment: his opinion had apparently changed upon reading the poem.[199] Apart from those already mentioned, the majority of Hunt's reviewers made no reference to the Dedication whatsoever. The evidence seemed to support the view held by both Hunt and Byron that the Story of Rimini would have met with little - if any - hostility had politics (or, indeed, personal enmity) 'not judged it'. Reflecting upon the poem in his Autobiography, Hunt argued that whilst 'critics might have differed about it...and reasonably have found fault', had it 'emanated from the circles, or been written by any person not obnoxious to political objection' the criticism 'in all quarters' would undoubtedly have been 'very goodnatured, and willing to hail whatever merit it possessed'.[200] 'I may therefore be warranted in having spoken of it', he concluded,

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197 'The Story of Rimini, a poem', 729.

198 Quoting 'Cockney School I', 40.

199 'The Story of Rimini; a Poem. By Leigh Hunt', Augustan Review (May 1816), quoted from Reiman, C, I, 38.

200 ALH, II, 172-3.

'without any greater allusion to quarrels which have long been over, and to which I have confessed that I gave the first cause of provocation'.[201]

One such 'quarrel' involved William Gifford, scourge of the so-called 'Cruscan (or, 'Della Crusca') school' and - from 1809 to 1824 - editor of the Quarterly Review. Together with John Wilson Croker, he was behind the 'flimsily disguised' attack on Hunt published in the Quarterly for May 1816.[202] Hunt had regarded Gifford as a 'critical authority'.[203] However, he 'conceived some personal disgust against him as a man' after seeing him 'amuse...himself with tripping up [Mrs Robinson's] crutches' at the beginning of the Baviad.[204] It was for this reason that he had turned on the satirist in the Feast of the Poets (1812 and 1814), portraying him as a 'sour little gentleman' in whose works were found a great many of the faults which he deprecated in others.[205] With this 'jeu-d'esprit' began the 'battle' to which Hunt referred in a notice published in the Examiner on 25 February 1816. The notice, which featured a letter concerning Gifford's 'touching' epitaph on his servant Ann Davies (extracted from the Gentleman's Magazine), was presented as 'an interval' in which Hunt 'only wish[ed]' to show himself a 'fellow-m[a]n' with one to whom he was 'no friend, publicly speaking'.[206] There are, he declared,

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201 ALH, II, 173.

202 Quoting Charles Cowden Clarke's An Address to that Quarterly Reviewer who touched upon Mr Leigh Hunt's "Story of Rimini" (London, 1816), 18.

203 See ALH, II, 85-7, and the Preface to Hunt's Ultra-Crepidarius; A Satire on William Gifford (London, 1823), iv, in which he notes that, having praised Gifford, he was himself 'pressed' to write in the Quarterly Review.

204 ALH, II, 86.

205 See Feast of the Poets, 7-8 and 57-61. The Feast was the source of much of the 'provocation' to which Hunt referred in his Autobiography, drawing 'upon [his] head all the personal hostility which had hitherto been held in a state of suspense by the vaguer daring of the *Examiner* ', ALH, II, 84-5.

206 'Epitaph by William Gifford, Esq.', Examiner (25 Feb. 1816), 122-3.

> feelings and circumstances in this world, before which politics, and satire, and poetry, are of little importance—feelings, that triumph over infirmity and distaste of every sort, and only render us anxious, in our respect for them, to be thought capable of appreciating them ourselves.[207]

At the head of the column in which the notice appeared was printed an extract from the opening of the Story of Rimini.[208] The review subsequently published in the Quarterly was, in fact, dated January. Nevertheless, Hazlitt - who remarked upon the proximity of the extracts in A Letter to William Gifford, Esq. (1819) - was in no doubt that Hunt's comments upon the epitaph had increased its editor's hostility towards him, uncovering 'sympathies' which 'might be prejudicial to [the latter's] official character':

> That Mr. Hunt should have supposed it possible...that a government automaton was accessible to anything like a liberal concession, is one of those deplorable mistakes which constantly put men who are 'made of penetrable stuff', at the mercy of those who are not. The amiable and elegant author of Rimini thought he was appealing to something human in your breast, in the recollection of your 'Dear Ann Davies'; he touched the springs, and found them 'stuffed with paltry blurred sheets' of the Quarterly Review, with notes from Mr. Murray, and directions how to proceed with the author, from the Admiralty Scribe.[209]

In any case, he observed, Hunt had already 'committed himself...past forgiveness' in the Feast of the Poets. It is 'no wonder', he added, that when he came to review the

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[207] 'Epitaph by William Gifford, Esq.', 123.

[208] The first fourteen lines, separated from the notice on Gifford by a short letter responding to an article published 10 Feb., Ibid. 122.

[209] Hazlitt quotes Hunt's notice in full, Howe, IX, 22-5.

Story of Rimini, Gifford should have chosen to introduce it as having been 'composed in Newgate', a name which he knew 'would sound more grateful to certain ears' than that of Surrey Jail.[210] As Hazlitt would argue in a subsequent essay, published in the Edinburgh Review (1823), this gave the poem 'a felon-like air..., and [made] it necessary for the fashionable reader to perform a sort of quarantine against it, as if it had a gaol-infection'.[211]

The metaphor of infection was one which Gifford and Croker had themselves used when assessing the '*principles* ', or, 'canons', on which the Story of Rimini was written. These had resulted in a Preface which, though it was clearly 'meant to be perfectly natural and unaffected', seemed to them 'the most strange, laboured, uncouth, and unintelligible species of prose that [they had] ever read'. Here, and in 'some of the subsequent verses', they argued, were to be found 'the first eruptions of [the] disease with which...Hunt insist[ed] upon inoculating mankind'.[212] The Blackwood's critics would identify the 'disease' in question as '*Metromanie* '.[213] This, of course, was the term that Gifford had used for the 'epidemic malady' described in his introduction to the Baviad.[214] The remedy prescribed by the 'Quarterly Reviewers' was a mixture of 'perverse misrepresentation', 'real, or affected want of comprehension' and 'flimsily disguised envy and malignity', similar to that dispensed by the earlier satire.[215] Their approach is typified by the following passage - reminiscent of the footnote in which Gifford had listed some of the most 'staggering'

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[210] Hazlitt goes on to describe this as a 'courtly innuendo' made in the 'same spirit of unmanly adulation' that had driven the earlier strike at Mrs Robinson, Letter to William Gifford, 25-6&n.

[211] 'The Periodical Press', Edinburgh Review (May 1823), quoted from Howe, XVI, 236-7.

[212] 'The Story of Rimini, a Poem', 753.

[213] 'Z.', 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. IV' (Aug. 1818), 519.

[214] See the Baviad and Mæviad, x-xiv, 49.

[215] Quoting Clarke's Address to that Quarterly Reviewer 18.

examples of Della Crusca's 'exquisite nonsense':[216]

> In what vernacular tongue, for instance, does Mr. Hunt find a lady's waist called *clipsome*, ...- or the shout of a mob 'enormous', ...- or a fit, *lightsome*; - or that a hero's nose is '*lightsomely* brought down from a forehead of clear-spirited thought', ...- or that his back 'drops' *lightsomely in*, ... Where has he heard of a *quit-like drop* - of *swaling* a jerked feather - of *unbedinned* music, ...- of the death of *leaping* accents,...of the *thick reckoning* of a hoof, - of a *pin-drop* silence,...a *readable* look, ...- a *half indifferent wonderment*, ...- or of '*Boy storied trees and passion plighted-spots* '.[217]

In the Preface to his English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809), Byron had described the author of the Baviad and Mæviad as a 'physician'.[218] In the opinion of Charles Cowden Clark - whose (anonymous) Address to that Quarterly Reviewer who touched upon Mr Leigh Hunt's Story of "Rimini" (1816) anticipated much of Hazlitt's comment in the subsequent Letter - however, the role assumed by the satirist was rather that of 'a mercenary, or a volunteer'.[219] 'Far from diffusing a wholsesome spirit through the world of letters', he argued, such reviews 'form a sort of *mideas,* round which the venom of every noxious creature is collected ready for circulation'.[220] Nevertheless, Clarke considered it 'a matter of triumph to the friends of genius and

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216 See Baviad and Mæviad, 14-16n.

217 Quarterly Review, 477.

218 Quoted from The Complete Poetical Works, ed. Jerome J. McGann, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1980-93), I, 228-9.

219 His comments regarding the introduction to the review are particularly reminisicent of Hazlitt's. For further details regarding the Address (including Hunt's response in a letter to Clarke dated 10 Jul. 1816) see John Barnard's 'Charles Cowden Clarke and the Leigh Hunt Circle 1812-1818', Romanticism 3.1 (1997), 76-8.

220 Address to that Quarterly Reviewer, 20-1.

integrity' that the Story of Rimini 'could elicit no rougher treatment *even* from a Quarterly Reviewer'. In his opinion the poem had 'passed the fiery ordeal'.[221]

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221 Address to that Quarterly Reviewer, 23-4.

CHAPTER IV

JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS AND THE GARDEN OF FLORENCE

'A sort of Book-Earthquake'

Looking back upon the 'Literary Warfare' of the 1810s in his Autobiography (1850), Leigh Hunt recalled having seen William Gifford not long after the Feast of the Poets appeared in the Reflector (23 March 1812). Directed towards where he was standing by his friend Barron Field, Hunt had caught 'the satirist who could not bear to be satirized' staring at him with 'a countenance between the querulous and the angry'; no doubt a reflection of the animosity that would drive the 'Quarterly Reviewer' to 'put the author of Rimini in Newgate, without the Sheriff's warrant' some four years later.[1] The occasion was the 'celebrated book sale' of the late John Ker, third Duke of Roxburgh, held at his former residence in St James Square between 18 May and 8 July 1812.[2] The library was believed to have cost an estimated 5000*l*. It sold for a total of 23341*l*, representing a high point in the interest in rare and old books generated, in a large degree, by Thomas Frognall Dibdin's 'Bibliographical Romance', Bibliomania; or Book Madness (1809 and, enlarged, 1811).[3] Indeed, Dibdin subsequently claimed that the sale had been 'benefitted to the amount of 5000*l*.' by the publication of his 'humble work'.[4] More remarkable than the final figure itself, however, was the sum raised by just one of the 9353 lots - reported to have been the 'largest...ever given for a single Volume'. Described in the Preface to the catalogue

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[1] ALH, II, 91-2. Hazlitt, 'A Letter to William Gifford', Howe, IX, 25-6.

[2] ALH, I, 251.

[3] Information regarding the sale chiefly derived from the entries on Dibdin and the Duke of Roxburgh in the DNB, XV (1888), 7 and XXXI (1892), 51.

[4] Reminiscences of a Literary Life (London, 1836), 356n.

compiled some years earlier by George Nicol as 'certainly one of the scarcest, if not the very scarcest book that exists', the 1471 first edition folio of Il Decameroni di Boccaccio, printed at Venice by Christopher Valdarfer, had been bought by the second Duke of Roxburgh for 100 guineas.[5] On 17 June 1812 - the day of the encounter between Hunt and Gifford - it sold to the Marquis of Blandford for 2260*l*, Earl Spencer having withdrawn from the competition following a discussion with his son, Viscount Althorp. In the words of Dibdin's 'Lisardo' (The Bibliographical Decameron, 1817), this price 'electrified the bystanders, and astounded the public'. Reaching and resounding from 'the utmost shores of Italy...the echo of that fallen hammer was heard in the libraries of Rome, of Milan, and St Mark'. Boccaccio himself, it was said, 'startled from his slumber of some five hundred years'.[6]

The impact of this 'unparalleled sale' - described in the Gentleman's Magazine as having been 'a sort of BOOK-EARTHQUAKE' - was soon felt throughout the 'whole Book-World'.[7] 'It was by no means a mere flourish of fiction', Dibdin insisted, when, recalling the 'bibliomaniacal sparring' that had marked 'the year ensuing the Roxburghe Contest', Lisardo declared that 'every man began to fancy he had a VALDARFER BOCCACCIO'. His patron Earl Spencer had 'received more than one letter filled with allurements to become a purchaser of that exquisite treasure'. The auctioneer, Robert Evans of Pall Mall, was apparently also 'besieged with cargoes of books, purporting to contain fine copies, not only of the Valdarfer Boccaccio, but of other rare works' that had featured in the Roxburgh collection.[8] Looking back upon

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[5] Preface quoted from 'The Roxburghe Sale', Gentleman's Magazine (Aug. 1812), 113-4.

[6] The Bibliographical Decameron; or, Ten Days Pleasant Discourse upon Illuminated Manuscripts, and subjects connected with Early Engraving, Typography, and Bibliography, 3 vols. (London, 1817), III, 62-7.

[7] T. F. Dibdin, 'A New Caxton. The Roxburgh Sale', Gentleman's Magazine (July 1812), 4-5.

[8] Bibliographical Decameron, III, 75&n.

the sale in his Reminiscences (1836), Dibdin gave this account of the events that followed:

> Every man pretending to some information about books was set a-hunting for the *Valdarfer Boccaccio*. From the half-ruined mansion on the summits of the *Vosges* to the castellated heights along the Rhine, a search for this indescribably rich treasure was immediately instituted. It might be even supposed to be the tenant of a Swiss cottage - and *Berne*, *Basle*, and *Zurich*, were examined with the sedulous pertinacity of an excise-officer. Italy was ransacked for this same jewel. All the towns where the art of printing had been exercised in its earlier stages, were explored. A stray copy might be still lurking in the *Sonbiaco* monastery. *Perugia*, *Brescia*, and *Bologna* - places of comparatively rare visitation - were minutely examined, in vain. The copies in the Magliabechi and Vatican libraries, were public property, and could not be removed. The Book Knight sighed as he gazed upon them - and with a heavy heart turned his horse's head in a different direction.[9]

The 'far-famed ROXBURGHE FIGHT' had also caught the attention of the 'News Papers and Magazines' of the day (some, Dibdin observed, taking 'quick possession' of reports that 'Bonaparte's Agent' had been involved).[10] The Gentleman's Magazine, for example, carried a number of items concerning the sale during the months that followed. These included a review, published August 1812, that provided extracts from the Preface to Nicol's catalogue (by then no longer available), together with a list of some of the more significant lots sold over the forty-five days.[11] The review had previously been announced at the close of an entry in the 'Domestic Occurrences' for

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[9] Reminiscences, 360-1.

[10] Bibliographical Decameron, III, 49, 65-6n. Dibdin cites a report in The Day for 18 June. 1812 by way of example.

[11] 'The Roxburghe Sale', 113-4.

July in which it was noted that 'a party of nobleman and gentleman, distinguished for their attachment to rare and curious books' had 'dined together at the St Alban's Tavern, St Alban's-street' on the evening of 17 June.[12] This 'Bibliomania Dinner', as it was here termed, constituted the inaugural meeting of the Roxburgh Club, presided over by Earl Spencer with Dibdin (by whom it was suggested) taking the role of Vice President.[13] Although it was often subject to 'charges of indulgence and frivolity', the Club did go on to assume 'more earnest functions' and has since been acknowledged as 'the parent of the publishing societies established in this country, which have done so much for English history and antiquities, to say nothing of other branches of literature'.[14]

Having remarked upon the origin of the Roxburgh Club, in July 1813 the editor of the Gentleman's Magazine granted a request to publish the 'momentous' proceedings of its first anniversary, again, held at the St Alban's Tavern on 17 June. The report - submitted by 'Templarius' - began with the following stirring reminder of 'the memorable day on which the...Boccaccio was sold for 2260*l* ' (the use of martial imagery anticipating subsequent accounts by Dibdin):

> Amongst the important events of later times, there are few that have excited a greater degree of interest than the transactions which took place at Roxburgh-House in July 1812. The warfare in St James-square was equalled only by the courage and gallantry displayed on the plains of Salamanca about the same period; and History will doubtless relate these celebrated feats in the same volume, for the information and astonishment of posterity. As a Pillar, or

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[12] 'Bibliomania Dinner', 79.

[13] Reminiscences, 367-9.

[14] See E. J. O'Dwyer's comments on the reputation and development of the Club in: Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Bibliographer & Bibliomaniac Extraordinary, 1776-1847 (Pinner, Middlesex, 1967), 20-3. Closing quote taken from the entry on Dibdin in the DNB.

> other similar memorial, could not be conveniently erected to mark the spot where so many *Bibliographical Champions* fought and conquered, another method was adopted, to record their fame, and perpetuate this brilliant epoch in literary annals. Accordingly a phalanx of the most hardy veterans has been enrolled, under the banner of the far-famed Valdarfers Boccaccio of 1471, bearing the title of the Roxburgh Club.[15]

It appears to have been at around this time that John Freeman Milward Dovaston asked John Hamilton Reynolds to send him a copy of the Decameron. An occasional contributor to the Gentleman's Magazine since at least 1808, when he took possession of his family estate of West Felton, near Oswestry, Dovaston is likely to have seen some, if not all, of the items concerning the 'transactions...at Roxburghe House'.[16] Reynolds had in fact written to him just under a week after the sale of the 'far-famed' Valdarfer edition (having previously neglected their correspondence for 'more than 4 months'). The letter, which was apparently written in a state of 'unpreparedness' owing to the late arrival of the frank, contained nothing regarding the 'war-fare in St-James Square'.[17] However, a sale reported to have 'engrossed a larger share of public attention' than any before it surely cannot have escaped his notice.[18] Like Dovaston, Reynolds both read and had contributed to the Gentleman's Magazine. He had long been an avid follower of the 'literary news', and frequently referred to numerous other newspapers and periodicals in his letters. A brief period working as a clerk in the office of one - the Day - had already given him sufficient confidence to enquire if his

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[15] 'Bibliomania Dinner' , 79, and 'Anniversary of the Bibliomanio-Roxburghe Club' (dated 10 Jul. 1813), 3.

[16] Richardson provides a summary of the 'numerous references to Dovaston', starting with a piece published Aug. 1808, Letters from Lambeth, 176-7.

[17] 23 June 1812, Ibid. 73-4. Although he had received a reply to his letter of 4 Nov. 1811, it seems that Reynolds had not written to Dovaston since that date.

[18] 'The Roxburghe Sale', 113.

friend could 'make an opening' for him as a 'London Correspondent' with the Shrewsbury Chronicle (the Day, incidentally, was amongst the papers subsequently cited by Dibdin in his notes to the Bibliographical Decameron).[19] Moreover, Reynolds was himself something of a 'bibliomaniac', spending much of his spare time (and, indeed, money) on the London 'Book circuit', where he may well have acquired some of the information passed on in his letters to Dovaston.[20] It was following his success at a sale held in the auction room of George Squibb, early in 1810, that Reynolds had urged his friend to rely on him to 'hunt' for any books that he should want, assuring him that he had become 'a most excellent hand at it'.[21]

The first indication of Dovaston's having requested the Decameron is found at the beginning of a letter dated 4 September 1813. Reynolds, who had spent the middle fortnight of August at West Felton, explained that he had 'packed up Boccaccio, the Waltz and a Bolero to be sent...by the Watton parcel', but would now have to wait until 'the end of the Month' as Longmans had already 'closed their Book-packing' by the time he got there. On 30 September, he wrote again to say that he had sent only 'a part' of the anticipated package as 'Longman & Co. [did not] have room for all'. 'One number of the Reflector I have detained', he continued, 'as there is a paper in it I wish to Copy - it shall come next Month together with the Decameron'.[22] The Reflector was a recent acquisition. In his previous letter, Reynolds had indicated that Walker was to 'procure' it for him, advising Dovaston that there were 'four numbers only'.[23] Evidently, this too had been discussed during the visit to West

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[19] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 10 May 1810, Letters from Lambeth, 50-1. The Edinburgh, Quarterly, and Monthly reviews and the Repository for Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufacture, Fashions and Politics are amongst those mentioned.

[20] The term 'Book circuit' taken from Reynolds' letter of 7 Sept. 1812, Ibid. 82.

[21] Letter dated 11-14 March 1810, Ibid. 49-50.

[22] Ibid. 105, 107.

[23] Presumably, George Walker (1772-1847). His name appears for the first time in Reynolds' letter to Dovaston of 11-14 Mar. 1810, Ibid. 49.

Felton. It is unfortunate that Reynolds specified neither number nor article in the letter of 30 September, as the Reflector may well have played a part in his introduction, both to Hunt's work, and, subsequently, to Hunt himself. Certainly, the first time that Hunt's name appears in the Reynolds-Dovaston correspondence it is in conjunction with this publication.[24] Reynolds's biographer, Leonidas M. Jones, suggests that Charles Lamb's 'Theatralia, No. 1.', published anonymously in the fourth issue, may have been the 'paper' to which he referred.[25] There were, however, other items that would have been of interest to him. For instance, his subsequent remarks upon the 1814 edition of the Feast of the Poets would suggest that Reynolds was already familiar with the version that had appeared in the Reflector.[26] Whilst it may not qualify as 'a paper' - unless, of course, the 'Prefatory Remarks' are taken into consideration - Hunt's 'Atys the Enthusiast: A Dithyrambic Poem Translated from Catullus' (published in the first number) is another piece that seems likely to have caught his eye.[27] Together with 'An Heroic Measure - some stanzas - and a long Essay upon Hamlet', a 'Paraphrase of Catullus's Address to his Vessell' formed part of Reynolds's contribution to the first number of the Inquirer, or Literary Miscellany.[28] Described in a letter to Dovaston of 19 July 1814 as 'a New Quarterly Magazine on the plan of the Reflector', this was the similarly short-lived publication of the 'Zetosophian (meaning 'wisdom seeking') Society', to which he had been elected some

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[24] He is introduced as Hunt 'of the Reflector' in Reynolds' letter to Dovaston of 19 Jul. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 118.

[25] Full title: 'On Garrick and Acting; and the Plays of Shakespeare, considered with their fitness for Stage Representation'. See Jones' discussion of the various influences on Reynolds' Shakespearean Criticism, LJHR, 83-4.

[26] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 19 Jul. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 118.

[27] Details from Kenneth E. Kendall, Leigh Hunt's Reflector (The Hague, 1971).

[28] In Reynolds' letter to Dovaston of 19 Jul. 1814, the 'Heroic Measure' appears to be a separate piece to the 'stanzas'. It is, however, absent from Jones' account of his contribution to the first number, Letters from Lambeth, 118 and LJHR, 50-1.

two years earlier.[29] The Inquirer, which had originated in the essays that members were required to present for discussion each month, appeared on 21 May 1814.[30] In the letter written to Dovaston just under two months later, Reynolds 'ha[d] the pleasure to say that Hunt' - with whom he was now personally acquainted - had seen and thought 'very highly of it'.[31]

Owing to an unfortunate breach in the friendship of Reynolds and Dovaston the exact circumstances of his introduction to Hunt are uncertain.[32] By the time he wrote to Dovaston on 19 July 1814, hoping to 'chase away the mist' that had descended between them towards the end of the previous year, Reynolds could 'boast of [Hunt] as a Friend'. He was aware of his plans for both the Descent of Liberty and the Story of Rimini, and had evidently seen the manuscript of the former before it went to press, for it was to the 'Mask' that he referred in praising Hunt's 'intimacy with the Italian Poets and...own brilliant...Italian Fancy'.[33] If he was not doing so already, it was not long before Reynolds was also benefiting from Hunt's 'facility' in lending books, finding the poet's own 'observations' in them to be 'most useful'.[34] Unfortunately, he specified neither titles nor authors when citing this example of his 'excellent Friend['s]' kindness in his letter to Dovaston of 10 October 1814. However

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[29] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 15 Sept. 1812, Letters from Lambeth, 89, 118.

[30] See Joseph Grigely, 'The Zetosophian Society and the Inquirer: A Romantic Literary Circle and its Periodical', Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin 33 (1982), 49-61.

[31] 19 Jul. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 118.

[32] In part, the result of a misunderstanding over a loan, though Reynolds' letter of 4 Dec. 1813 suggests that his 'delay' in sending the books had caused further irritation. In addition, see Mrs Reynolds to Dovaston, 29 Nov. 1813 and [Mar./Apr. 1814], Ibid. 112-117.

[33] Ibid. 117-119.

[34] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 10 Oct. 1814, Ibid. 130, and Hunt, 'My Books', in which he reflects upon the advantages and disadvantages of this 'facility', The Indicator, and The Companion, II, 182, 188-9.

(as we saw in Chapter III), an idea of the books that Hunt had at his disposal may be derived from his correspondence and, in particular, the 'memorandum' in which he had outlined the course of study that he intended to follow whilst in prison.[35] As the following extract from one of his earlier letters to Dovaston shows, such a course would not have been unfamiliar to Reynolds:

> I am now attending very closely to my Greek and Latin classics, I make it a point never to go to Bed 'till twelve, so that from 9 'till that time, I employ myself as above mentioned; or in carefully attending to our best English writers; such verse writing as the before mentioned specimen [an 'Anacreontic' on 'the *Spirits of Wine*'] is a pleasant relaxation to the more close study.[36]

This practice of studying 'the Classics' in the evenings was a long-established one for Reynolds who, upon leaving school in 1809, had sought to combine it with the acquirement of such skills as would assist his professional development (just as Hunt aimed to pursue 'a course of epic poetry from Homer to Virgil, and...through the Italian school to the English' whilst also obtaining 'a full and proper knowledge of what a journalist, of his description, ought...to know...of history and legislation').[37] Having already learnt Latin at St Paul's, Reynolds had gone on to teach himself Greek ('using an English & Greek Grammar instead of a Latin & G[ree]k one'). As he explained to Dovaston on 23 June 1812, the 'grand point at which [he] aim[ed]' was the ability 'to read Homer in his own garb'.[38] He would presumably, therefore, have appreciated the sight of this 'great poetic patriarch' looking down from the shelves in

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[35] See entries dated 16 and 17 Mar. 1813, Correspondence, I, 78-81.

[36] Letter, dated 21 Nov. 1812, quoted from: John Clubbe, 'The Reynolds-Dovaston Correspondence', Keats-Shelley Journal 30 (1981), 167-8.

[37] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 11 Sept. 1809, Letters from Lambeth, 42 and Hunt's 'Memorandum' for 16 Mar. 1813, Correspondence, I, 79.

[38] In addtion, see Reynolds to Dovaston, 4 Nov. 1811, Letters from Lambeth, 70-4.

Hunt's prison-room.[39] Throughout his studies Reynolds was guided by Dovaston, whom he had long regarded as 'an Oracle', having - in the words of his mother - 'a high Opinion' of his 'knowledge, learning & sense'. Rather like Hunt, Dovaston was in the habit of discussing his own projects with his young friend. These included his Fitz-Gwarine volume of 1812, which Reynolds seems likely to have shown to Hunt. He had also sought 'to interfere in his improvement' by 'offering to recommend... Books' that he thought 'may to be his advancement'.[40]

Another 'Gentleman' of whose 'Genius' Reynolds had long 'entertain[ed] very great ideas', and of whose kindness towards him he could now boast, was Byron.[41] It may even have been through him that Hunt first 'became acquainted' with the name of the second of his 'Young Poets'.[42] He would certainly have been able to give him an opinion on Reynolds' promise as a writer, having been introduced to his work at the end of 1813. His 'favourable outset' with Byron had apparently caused friction in Reynolds' already strained relationship with Dovaston when it was communicated to the latter in somewhat spiteful terms by their mutual - and increasingly unstable - friend Ralph Rylance, the implication having been that Reynolds hoped that hearing of it would 'chagrin & torment' him. According to the report of 23 December 1813, Reynolds had sent the manuscript of his 'Eastern Tale', Safie, to John Murray earlier that month, after an initial approach had been made to the publisher by his father. Murray had then passed it to Byron, who 'wrote a number of notes in a black kind of scrawl, approving & suggesting amendments in it' (as he would with the drafts of Hunt's Story of Rimini) 'and at the end of the Poem wrote bravo bravissimo'.[43] As it

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[39] Quoting Hunt to Marianne, 29 May 1813, Correspondence, I, 89.

[40] See Mrs Reynolds' acknowledgement of Dovaston's offer in her letter of 9 Mar. 1808, and Reynolds' letter of 19 Jul. 1814, in which he asked if he could give Hunt a copy of Fitz-Gwarine, Ibid. 11-12, 118.

[41] Quoting Reynolds to Dovaston, 19 Jul. 1812, Ibid. 118.

[42] Examiner (1 Dec. 1816), 761-2.

[43] For Rylance's letter - and his 'steady decline into...insanity' - see LJHR, 43-7.

turned out, Safie was published not by Murray but by James Cawthorn and Reynolds' fellow-Zetosophian John Martin (indeed, it may have been Cawthorn who brought about the initial meeting with Hunt, having also published the revised edition of the Feast of the Poets at around the same time).[44] It was, however, inscribed to Byron 'with every sentiment of gratitude and respect', prompting him to write a letter of encouragement to Reynolds, shortly after receiving his presentation copy, on 20 February 1814. Just over a week later (and, it has been suggested, after further communication with Reynolds), Byron wrote to Francis Hodgson asking if he would take the young poet's production 'into dissection and do it *gently* ', not for the sake of the inscription, 'but because [he knew] the misery, at his time of life, of untoward remarks upon first appearance'.[45] The 'apprehension' regarding 'the Reviewers' expressed in these letters brings to mind Byron's prediction concerning the Story of Rimini in his acknowledgement of Hunt's 'public compliment' two years later.[46] It would seem from Reynolds' account of a review shown to him when Safie was 'first published' that it was equally justified; the following could well have been written of the reaction of Hunt's 'political and personal enemies' to the poem of 1816:

> In [it] the Work was most unmercifully mawled...I was pointed out as a dangerous character - the Poem held up as an immoral one - & all the abuse launched at me & it that was possible.[47]

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[44] See Anna Kaier on the possible involvement of Cawthorn in: 'John Hamilton Reynolds: Four New Letters', Keats-Shelley Journal XXX (1981), 182-3.

[45] BLJ, IV, 68-9, 74, and - for Byron's record of the earlier letter in his journal - III, 254-6. Hodgson's criticism appeared in the Monthly Review for September. For the evidence concerning the additional communication, see LJHR, 50n.

[46] Byron to Hunt, 26 Feb. 1816, BLJ, V, 32.

[47] Reynolds' recollection of an evening spent 'with a few Gentlemen at a Booksellers' quoted from his letter to Dovaston of 23 Aug. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 123.

By the time he wrote this, on 23 August 1814, Reynolds had himself acknowledged that his 'first attempt' was far from perfect. It was, he felt, 'very defective...in spirit and consequently in interest '. Nevertheless, he retained 'some liking for it, in spite of its weaknesses', for - as he had explained in the earlier 'Letter of Amity' to Dovaston - 'it ha[d] introduced [him] to some of the Noblest and Cleverest Men of the Age'.[48]

When he wrote to Dovaston on 19 July 1814, Reynolds was already 'engaged in another Poem' for which he had apparently 'laid vast Plans'. Presumably, this was the Eden of Imagination, completed by the end of July and published later in the year (the 'Town' having been found to be 'very dull' when it was printed).[49] In it, Reynolds paid tribute to the noble and clever men whom he had mentioned in his letter by picturing a table upon which his most treasured books - including several that had been either recommended by, or shared with, friends -'lay negligently free':

> Oh! there let Byron give my mind delight,
> And tell his Eastern narratives at night; -
> ...
> Let Campbell lead his Hope within my bowers, -
> And Wordsworth's genius illustrate my flowers;
> ...
> Southey shall bring his 'wild and wond'rous lays';
> And sad Alcæus paint primæval days.
> With Moore o'er Erin's valour I'll rejoice,
> And hear again, in him, Ancreon's voice; -
> ...
> Scott may recite his tales of yore, and touch
> The harp of Scotland, which I love so much.
> Rogers - I'll not forget thee: - oh! 'twere hard

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[48] Reynolds to Dovaston, 19 Jul. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 119.

[49] For the delay in publication see Reynolds letter of 30 Sept. 1814, Ibid. 119, 127.

If Memory should omit her sweetest bard.
Crabbe too may not refuse to me, to impart
His pure, bold excellence to mend the heart:
And though the last, yet not admir'd the least,
Hunt shall describe to me a Poet's Feast
Oh! in the days when life and love are young,
'Tis sweet to cherish what the bards have sung.[50]

It would seem that the last book to be placed on the table was by no means 'the least' in Reynolds' thoughts either. Informing Dovaston of the 'lately published' edition of a poem that he would already have known from the Reflector, Reynolds commended it as a volume containing 'Notes of much interest & judgement'.[51] According to Jones, the Feast of the Poets, had been responsible for 'turn[ing] Reynolds' attention from Byron to Wordsworth', upon whose Evening Walk (1793) the Eden of Imagination is said to draw (Wordsworth, as we shall see, was another to whom Reynolds would seek an introduction, approaching him in much the same way as he had Byron).[52] Hunt's poem also seems to have influenced an essay that Reynolds subsequently submitted to the Champion, in which Wordsworth appeared 'almost like a god'.[53] Published on 7 April 1816, 'The Pilgrimage of Living Poets to the Stream of Castaly' had apparently existed in some form since at least the spring of 1814 (the 'Stream of Castaly' denoting the spring on Mount Parnassus held sacred to Apollo and the Muses).[54] Presented by Blunden as a parallel to the Feast of the Poets, the essay also recalls the description of the book-laden table in the Eden of Imagination.[55]

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50 The Eden of Imagination. A Poem (London, 1814), 24-7.

51 19 Jul. 1814, Letters from Lambeth, 118.

52 See Jones' comments on the similarities between the two poems, LJHR, 52-3.

53 Jones' term: Ibid. 89.

54 For evidence concerning an earlier manuscript version see Ibid. , 331-2n.27.

55 Blunden, Leigh Hunt: A Biography, 110-1.

The 'Pilgrimage of Living Poets', may well have contributed in some way to a conversation to which Hunt alluded in an epistle printed in the Examiner later that month. Far from being deterred by the reaction of his critics, Hunt used the epistle marking Byron's 'departure for Italy and Greece' to draw attention once again to the 'unceremonious and unpretending humanities of private intercourse' acknowledged in the dedication to the Story of Rimini. A line in which he thanks him for 'taking spirit as it means to be' also recalls Byron's acceptance of the controversial address in the letter of 26 February. We already know that Byron had undertaken to send back any information that he should uncover regarding the history behind Hunt's poem. In bidding him 'adieu', the poet reminded him of another promise that he had made 'About the flask from dark-welled Castaly, - A draught, which but to think of, as I sit, Makes the room around me almost turn with wit'.[56] In Reynolds' essay, Hunt was given the honour of collecting the inspirational 'draught' for himself:

> Next came Hunt, with a rich fanciful goblet in his hand, finely enamelled with Italian landscapes; he held the cup to his breast as he approached, and his eyes sparkled with frank delight. After catching a wave, in which sun-beam seemed freshly melted, he intimated that he should water hearts-ease and many favourite flowers with it. The sky appeared of a deep blue as he was retiring.[57]

Hearts-ease were, of course, among the 'many favourite flowers' with which Hunt had filled his 'little garden' at Surrey Jail; a garden that Reynolds' would surely have seen and which may well have been in his thoughts when he wrote this passage.[58] The

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[56] 'To the Right Honourable Lord Byron on his Departure for Italy and Greece', Examiner (28 Apr. 1816), 266-7, and Rimini, vi.

[57] Quoted from the Selected Prose of John Hamilton Reynolds, ed. Leonidas M. Jones (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966), 48.

[58] ALH, II, 148-9.

description of the goblet also recalls his comments upon the Descent of Liberty, both in the letter to Dovaston of 19 July 1814, and in his letter of 'thanks & congratulations' for the copy received 24 February 1815, in which he had declared 'the Mask' to be 'the richest & most fanciful work that has appeared for many years'.[59] Writing to Dovaston shortly after Hunt had acknowledged his letter in the Examiner (26 February), Reynolds described 'the Poem' as having 'very much of the sunny richness of fancy which beams in Comus'. His (Hunt's) 'personifications are amazingly fine', he explained, and 'his descriptions of flowers are as fresh as growing flowers & as brilliant'.[60] This clearly anticipates the portrait of Hunt given in the essay published in the Champion the following year. However, just as the Eden of Imagination had highlighted the new edition of the Feast of the Poets, his appearance in 'The Pilgrimage' was primarily intended to celebrate Hunt's achievement in the Story of Rimini, then his most recent publication. One of the first positive responses to the poem, Reynolds' essay anticipated a number of subsequent reviews in its consideration of Hunt's work in relation to that of other living poets.[61] It also succeeded in capturing something of the 'love for the beauties of external nature' and 'more southern insight into the beauties of colour' that Hunt would himself identify as being amongst the poem's strengths when he came to look back upon it in his Autobiography.[62]

Reynolds' letter to Dovaston of February 1815 reveals that Hunt had promised to insert his poem 'The Fairies' in the next issue of the Examiner (seemingly, either 5 or 12 March), this being the 'little piece' to which he had referred in a postscript to his recent letter to Hunt.[63] As it turned out, the poem never appeared, news of

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[59] Letters from Lambeth, 118, 131 and Kaier, 183-5.

[60] Reynolds to Dovaston, 25 Feb. 1815-[?], Ibid. 131.

[61] See the notices in the Eclectic Review (Apr. 1816) and Dublin Examiner (Jun. 1816).

[62] ALH, II, 171.

[63] Letters from Lambeth, 131-2 and Kaier, 185-6.

Napoleon's return from Elba having occupied all the available space.[64] However, Hunt made up for this, and returned the compliment paid him in 'The Pilgrimage', when he included a passage from the principal poem of Reynolds' new volume, the Naiad, in the 'Young Poets' article of 1 December 1816. The following week, Reynolds' 'Lines upon the Story of Rimini' appeared in the Champion (8 December), prompting Hunt to write a sonnet which he would later publish in Foliage (1818), together with those addressed to his other 'Young Poets', Shelley and Keats. Whilst it was primarily an acknowledgement of the recent 'Lines', Hunt's sonnet (like his epistle to Byron) also appeared to look back to an earlier date in recalling Reynolds' visits to the 'close-entwined bower' of Surrey Jail:

> Where many fine-eyed Friendships and glad Graces,
> Parting the boughs, have looked in with like faces,
> And thanked the song which had sufficient power
> With Phoebus to bring back a warmer hour,
> And turn his southern eye to our green places.[65]

Among the 'many...like faces' referred to in the sonnet was that of the artist Benjamin Robert Haydon. The circumstances of his own introduction to Reynolds are unclear. However, Jones suggests that it may have been through Haydon that Reynolds met the editor of the Champion, John Scott, sometime before the beginning of December 1815 (by which time he had joined the paper's staff).[66] The two were certainly close by the following summer, for it was to Haydon that Reynolds dedicated the Naiad,

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[64] LJHR, 61. Reynolds' poem eventually appeared in the Champion (4 Aug. 1816) and was subsequently published in The Naiad. A Tale. with other Poems (London, 1816).

[65] From: 'To John Hamilton Reynolds, On his Lines upon the Story of Rimini', Foliage; or Poems Original and Translated (London, 1818), 130.

[66] LJHR, 64.

addressing him as one 'who admires his genius and values his friendship'.[67] Reynolds had prepared Haydon for this 'most momentous inscription' in a letter sent from Exeter on 26 August 1816, advising him that he would receive two copies of the poem 'in about a week'. 'One of these you will keep for yourself, as a trifling but sincere mark of my friendship for you, & of my sense of the friendship which you hold for me', he explained, 'the second copy you will convey with the letter I wrote, to Wordsworth; - And if you would give my friend the Naiad a letter of introduction, I should be glad'.[68] This was not the first time that Reynolds had approached Wordsworth in this way. The letter to Dovaston of February 1815, indicates that he had previously sent the poet a copy of The Eden of Imagination, in return for which he had received 'a very friendly letter' congratulating him 'on the love of the country which [his] Poetry evince[d]'.[69] Now, as Wordsworth's reply of 28 November 1816 reveals, he asked him 'to find fault in order that [he] may profit by [his] remarks'.[70]

Wordsworth's statement that he had received The Naiad 'through the hands of Messrs. Longman' just 'a few days ago', would indicate that Haydon had not dealt with the two copies as Reynolds had asked (indeed, Jones suggests, he may have had to forward the package himself upon his return to London).[71] He evidently allowed his friend to believe otherwise, however, for on 28 September 1816 Reynolds wrote to Haydon thanking him for his 'good taste...in praising his verses', adding 'I am glad you have sent the Copy to Wordsworth for me'. It seems that Haydon had also informed him that his book was to be taken to Italy (though by whom is unclear). This gave rise to the following 'freak of the fancy' (reminiscent of parts of 'The Pilgrimage of Living Poets'):

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[67] See Haydon's Diary, II, 102 & n.

[68] Letter printed in: Leonidas M. Jones, 'New Letters, Articles, and Poems by John Hamilton Reynolds', Keats-Shelley Journal 6 (Winter 1957), 98-9.

[69] Letters from Lambeth, 132 and LJHR, 55.

[70] Wordsworth's letter quoted from the extract given by Jones, Ibid. 75.

[71] Ibid. 67-8, 75, 329-30n.33.

> And am I to be read in Italy?—Am I to go into the land of soft suns & polished hearts;—where Painting & Poetry dwelt, as in their home?—I shall envy my own Child. What would I not give to roam down the banks of the Arno, with a volume of Shakespeare or Spenser in one hand & with your arm to support my other. How should we read! How should we think! How richly sho[uld] we talk! The landscape lying like a mixture of grass & gold about us —The blue sky arching over us.—flowers at our feet—and water running through smiles and music beside us. Why illustrissimo Pittore! We should feel like Raphaels [*sic*] and Spenser. We should think of elder times,—of romances—of fairy wonders!—We should speak up to the pitch of a Titania or an Oberon. Surely our Spirits would be fit company for the wildest & lightest Spirits that ever revelled on the bank of moonlight-stream, or crept into a harebell to screen them from a hot sunrise.[72]

The reference to 'Raphaels', together with Reynolds' earlier observation that his friend 'would deserve to be excommunicated if [he] did not throw a lustre over [his] name with such a birth-place' as Devonshire, prefigures the sonnet 'Haydon! - Thou'rt born to Immortality!', in which 'the wings of Raphael's spirit' were said to 'play about' him.[73] Writing to Haydon on 22 November 1816, Reynolds explained that this had 'absolutely started into [his] mind' after the artist had left him the night before. Haydon had then shown him Keats' sonnet 'Great Spirits now on Earth are sojourning', which he had received with a note dated 20 November (a second copy, sent the following day and intended for Wordsworth, suffered a similar fate to Reynolds' Naiad, Haydon having kept it for over a month).[74] Reynolds went on to ask

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[72] 'New Letters, Articles, and Poems', 100.

[73] For the comments on Devonshire see Reynolds to Haydon, 26 Aug. 1816, Ibid. 98. The sonnet quoted from Reynolds' letter to Haydon of 22 Nov. 1816, LJK, I, 120.

[74] Haydon eventually inlcuded the sonnet in a letter to Wordsworth of 31 Dec., Ibid. I, 117-9 &n.

that Haydon should send a copy of his own sonnet to 'Mr Keats', saying 'how much [he] was pleased with his'.[75] He had already been introduced to the latter at some point during the previous month, either at Hunt's cottage in the Vale of Health, as he later remembered it, or at Haydon's own lodgings in Pond Street (27 October).[76] Clearly, their friendship was still at an early stage. However, by the time Keats made his visit to the Isle of Wight in April 1817, Reynolds (together with Haydon) was amongst those 'pushing each other out of [his] Brain by turns'.[77] The following year would see them 'bound up...in the shadows of mind', preparing a joint 'Compliment... to Boccac[cio]'; a project that appears to have originated with a comment in the fourth of William Hazlitt's 'Lectures on the English Poets'.[78]

The compliment to Boccaccio

Writing to Mary Leigh of Slade Hall, near Sidmouth on 28 April 1817, Reynolds reported that Hazlitt had called at 19 Lamb's Conduit Street 'on Thursday last' (24 April), remaining with them 'till 3 o'clock in the morning'.[79] His account of their conversation formed the basis of the 'long *personality* ' that followed, reminiscent of Hazlitt's own recollection of a visit from Coleridge in 'My First Acquaintance with Poets' (an early version of which had appeared in the Examiner

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[75] LJK, 117-9.

[76] See Reynolds to the biographer Richard Monckton Milnes, 30 Dec. 1846, The Letters of John Hamilton Reynolds, ed. Leonidas M. Jones (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1972), 60, and Haydon's verse invitation to Reynolds, The Keats Circle: Letters and Papers 1814-1879, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. 2nd edn. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965), I, 4-6.

[77] Quoting Keats to his brothers, 15 Apr. 1817, LJK, I, 129.

[78] Quoting Keats to Reynolds, 27 Apr. 1818, Ibid. I, 274.

[79] Letters, 7-10.

for 12 January).[80] He was, Reynolds told her:

> full of eloquence,—warm, lofty & communicative on every thing Imaginative & Intelligent,—breathing out with us the peculiar & favourite beauties of our best Bards,—Passing from grand & commanding argument, to the gaieties & graces of wit and humour,—and the elegant and higher beauties of Poetry. He is indeed *great* company, and leaves a weight upon the mind, which 'it can hardly bear'. He is full of what Dr. Johnson terms 'good talk'. His countenance is also extremely fine:—a sunken & melancholy face,—a forehead lined with thought and bearing a full & strange pulsation,—on exciting subjects,—an eye, dashed in its light with sorrow, but kindling *& living* at intellectual moments,—and a stream of coal-black hair dropping around all. Such a face, so silent and so sensitive, is indeed the banner of the mind. 'It is a book, in which men may read strange things'. He would have become the pencil of Titian, and have done justice to the soul-fed colours of that bold & matchless Italian.[81]

A similar 'personality' would appear in the Scots Magazine, to which Reynolds was invited to contribute at the beginning of 1818, probably upon Hazlitt's recommendation.[82] In 'Living Authors, A Dream', published August 1820 (the dream in question being a revision of the earlier 'Pilgrimage'), Reynolds took the reader through the pages of his 'matchless commonplace-book', in which it was his 'constant custom' to record his observations 'of the literary gentlemen whom it [was] in [his]

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[80] See 'To the Editor of the Examiner' (published as 'Mr. Coleridge's Lay-Sermon') in Letters of William Hazlitt, 165-7. The essay would appear in the Liberal (Apr. 1823).

[81] Letters, 9.

[82] LJHR, 133, writing to his brothers on 23-4 Jan. 1818, Keats reported that 'Constable...ha[d] offered Reynolds ten g[u]ineas a sheet to write for his magazine', LJK, I, 216-7.

good fortune to encounter'. Here, in a passage that could well have been written following the particular 'encounter' described in the letter to Mary Leigh, Hazlitt was presented as one 'whose mind is the store-house of all deep thoughts and proud imaginations', his 'keen, yet serious face, encircled by its raven hair', having 'all the intellect and quiet power of one of Titian's portraits'.[83] That Reynolds' description of Hazlitt should again lead him to think of Titian is no surprise. As he would note in a review of the Conversations of James Northcote, Esq. (1830), published in the Athenaeum shortly after the critic's death, Hazlitt had himself 'studied as a painter'.[84] Inspired by an exhibition of the so-called 'Orleans Gallery', held in Pall Mall from December 1798 to July 1799, he had travelled to Paris during the Peace of Amiens (October 1802 - January 1803) where he had obtained permission to make copies of pictures housed in the Louvre.[85] Among those that he selected were two portraits by Titian, one of his 'Mistress at her Toilette', the other of 'Hippolito de Medici' (his treasured copies of which were briefly owned by Haydon in 1819).[86] The faces of these, and Titian's other portraits, 'haunted him and never passed from him', Reynolds recalled, 'and when he spoke of them, it was as though he had discoursed with high spirits, and had bent his eyes on some strange supernatural light'.[87] Reynolds was not the only one of his acquaintance upon whose mind Hazlitt left 'a vivid and picturesque impression'. Recalling his first interview with the critic in the committee room of the Surrey Institution (1817), of which he was then 'one of the managers', P. G. Patmore

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[83] Reynolds' essay, introduced in the form of a letter dated 'London, July 21', quoted from the Selected Prose, 254, 256-7.

[84] Ibid. 412-5, 479. Hazlitt died 18 Sept. 1830. Reynolds' review appeared 2 Oct.

[85] See Howe's The Life of William Hazlitt (London, 1928), (quoting his Table Talk essay 'On the Pleasure of Painting'), 55-67.

[86] For Haydon's purchase of the copies, and their return to Hazlitt a year later, see Herschel Baker's William Hazlitt (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, 1975), 242-3 & n.

[87] Selected Prose, 412.

noted that he had found himself thinking of 'Sir Joshua's "Ugolino"'.[88] His well-documented admiration of Titian in particular was also remarked upon by Bryan Waller Procter, whose friendship with Hazlitt was said by Patmore to have endured 'without breach' until the critic's death in 1830. There was, he asserts, 'not one' of Hazlitt's friends 'more tolerant and considerate towards him, or more kind and generous to the last'.[89] As we shall see, Procter had himself produced a number of adaptations from the Decameron (under the pseudonym 'Barry Cornwall'), in the years following the lectures 'On the English Poets'.[90] They included a 'Dramatic Sketch' based on the tale of 'The Falcon' (1820), a particular favourite of Hazlitt's, and one that he 'could read and think of from day to day, just as [he] would look at a picture of Titian's'.[91] Indeed, he commended Procter's version of it during the eighth of his lectures 'On the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth' - in preparation for which Procter had lent him 'about a dozen volumes, comprehending the finest of the old plays' - directing his audience towards the 'glowing and richly-coloured conclusion'.[92] Writing in the New Monthly Magazine for November 1830, Procter

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[88] My Friends and Acquaintance: Being Memorials, Mind-Portraits, and Personal Recollections of Deceased Celebrities of the Nineteenth Century with selections from their unpublished letters, 3 vols. (London, 1854), II, 249-53. Reynolds' 'Count Hugolino and his Children in the dungeon' appeared at the Royal Academy in 1773 (No. 243).

[89] My Friends and Acquaintance, III, 161-3.

[90] In: Dramatic Scenes and Other Poems (London, 1819) and A Sicilian Story, with Diego Montilla and Other Poems (London, 1820).

[91] See Hazlitt's essay 'On Reading Old Books', No. XX in The Plain Speaker (1826), Howe, XII, 227.

[92] See 'On the Spirit of Ancient and Modern Literature, etc.', Howe, VI, 346-7, and the 'Recollections' published with Procters' An Autobiographical Fragment and Biographical Notes, with Personal Sketches of Contemporaries, Unpublished Lyrics, and Letters of Literary Friends, (London, 1877), 173.

recalled his own introduction to Hazlitt some 'fourteen or fifteen years' earlier (in fact, he seems he have met him in 1819). His comments on the critic's 'very striking' appearance echo those made by Reynolds both in the letter to Mary Leigh and in the essay published in the Scots Magazine. It would, Procter stated, 'have made an excellent picture. Had the painter whom he most loved (Titian) been then living, he would have been well pleased to have had such a countenance whereon to exercise his art'. 'Nor', he added, 'would he have disdained to hand down to posterity the features of his eloquent admirer'.[93] It is perhaps worth noting here that a similar compliment had been paid to Procter himself in the Examiner for 17 September 1820, where it was stated that 'if Titian could come to life again, to paint his portrait for him in gratitude for his love to Italy, he would put by the side of it a rose bending with dew, from out a sunny glass'.[94]

Having concluded the earlier of his own portraits of Hazlitt with the observation that he would have been a subject worthy of Titian, Reynolds paused to consider that Mary may 'be tired with this long *personality* '. He had already acknowledged that the 'everlasting fault' of his letters was their tendency to 'becom[e] *essaical*" when 'releas[ing]' her from a 'needless eulogy on Shakespeare'. However, 'I remember having read a few of [Hazlitt's] papers to you', he continued, 'and therefore imagine that you will not be wholly uninterested in him'.[95] Reynolds, whose own work Mary had seen prior to making his 'actual acquaintance', had been at Slade as recently as January. There, he was joined by James Rice, who, together with Benjamin Bailey, had met the Leigh sisters (Mary, Sarah and Thomasine) during the

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[93] Procter's 'Recollections' quoted from Howe's Life of William Hazlitt, 234-5. In addition, see the version published in 1877, in which Procter states that he met Hazlitt 'at the house of Leigh Hunt' (and not, as he had previously suggested, of Charles Lamb), Autobiographical Fragment, 176

[94] Hunt, 'Marcian Colonna, and Italian Tale, with Three Dramatic Sketches and other Poems, by Barry Cornwall', 603.

[95] Letters, 8, 9.

summer of 1814, visiting them on numerous occasions thereafter.[96] It would seem, however, that in recalling the reading of Hazlitt's papers Reynolds looked back to his first visit, the previous autumn (31 August - 11 September 1816). 'What a fine hour was that in your room with Eliza, Maria & yourself', he wrote, referring to Eliza Powell Drewe, whom he would later marry, and the Leighs' cousin, Maria Pearse:

> I have not forgotten a single slope, brake, or tree, which feasted my eyes when I was sojourning at your green, romantic & sea-crowned home. There was that delightful walk on the mellow Autumn evening, under the young trees, to the cliff!—There was the Sea 'whispering eternally on desolate shores'!—There was the ruin, with its ivied window, and silent story of decay! There was the blessed sky, with its wide look of peace, and the calm smile on its face!—But 'above all,' there was the company of Eliza & yourself. I know not how it is, Mary, but that evening is sweeter to me apparently in my recollection. It seems something hallowed by memory. I remember all—Eliza with her handkerchief over head, by my side,—& you, with yr. brow 'bared to the elements'.—Well, such days might come again.[97]

Such evenings would be remembered in the Garden of Florence; and Other Poems (1821), which Reynolds dedicated to Eliza, as he had 'pledged in hours gone by', presenting it as 'this record of past hours;/This chronicle of feelings gone for aye'.[98] As he explained in Advertisement , 'the greater part' of the poems had 'been written for some years'. He doubted that age had 'improved them', however. 'Modern Poetry

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[96] See Clayton E. Hudnall, 'John Hamilton Reynolds, James Rice, and Benjamin Bailey in the Leigh Browne-Lockyer Collection', Keats-Shelley Journal 29 (1970), 11-39. The term 'actual acquaintance' used by Rice in a letter to Thomasine Leigh of 9 Oct. 1815.

[97] Letters, 9-10.

[98] 'The Garden of Florence; and Other Poems (London, 1821), v-ix.

is not, perhaps, bettered by being hoarded according to the directions of Horace', he added (alluding to advice that Byron had cited when urging Hunt to complete the Story of Rimini); 'for to be seen in its freshest colours, it should be "worn in its newest gloss"'.[99] Among the poems to which Reynolds referred was the first (and, as it turned out, only) Canto of 'The Romance of Youth', a poem which has been shown to contain a further portrait of Hazlitt in the character of a 'wise friend' who appears towards the end.[100] It is thought that he may have begun writing this 'fragment' during the holiday of 1816, either at Slade, or at Eliza's home in Exeter, where he had passed a further three weeks after taking leave of the Leighs on 11 September. He was certainly working on it - and had probably written most of what appears in the Garden of Florence - when he returned in January, for he then copied a number of stanzas into the girls' commonplace books.[101] 'The plan of this poem came suddenly on the Author's mind some few years back', the preface indicates, 'at a time when he was passing his hours in a most romantic part of the country,—and when all his feelings were devoted to poetry'.[102] This recalls the letter to Haydon of 26 August 1816, in which Reynolds had declared Devonshire to be a 'glorious Country', where 'Painting and Poetry seem ...to grow with the grass[,]... bloom with the flowers' and 'breathe from the Hills'.[103] In a review of the volume published in the Examiner for 17 June 1821, 'The Romance of Youth' was said to be 'allusive' to Keats, who, as we shall see, was himself in that 'most romantic part of the country' when he completed 'Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil' (it had stood but 'a very poor chance' with him,

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[99] Ibid. xi. Byron to Hunt, 22 Oct. 1815: 'I am not sure...that the "nomum &c". is attended with advantage unless we read "months" for "years"'. Marchand's note: 'Horace, De Arte Poetica, line 388: Nonumque prematur in anum..."Let (your compositions) rest in the cupboard for nine years"', BLJ, IV, 320.

[100] Garden of Florence, 31-5, 83-6, and LJHR, 103, 333n.19.

[101] Ibid. 78, and Hudnall, 21 & n.22

[102] Garden of Florence, 31-5.

[103] 'New Letters, Articles, and Poems', 98.

however, constant rain having frustrated his hopes of being able to send Reynolds 'a few songs written in [his] favourite Devon').[104]

As Clayton E. Hudnall has pointed out, Keats had also entered the letter to Mary Leigh 'obliquely', when, in describing her 'romantic & sea-crowned home', Reynolds used a phrase adapted from his sonnet 'On the Sea' ('There was the Sea "whispering eternally on desolate shores"!' from 'It keeps eternal Whisperings around/Desolate shores').[105] The sonnet had been included in the poet's recent letter from Carisbrooke (17-18 April), where he had gone with the intention of concentrating on his own long poem, Endymion (the myth behind which features, briefly, in 'The Romance of Youth').[106] There it was prefaced by the statement that he had been 'rather *narvus* ' from 'want of regular rest' and that 'the passage in Lear—"Do you not hear the Sea?"—ha[d] haunted [him] intensely'. Hudnall adds that Reynolds may also have been 'remembering' Keats' letter when he wrote the '*essaical*...eulogy on Shakespeare'. His explanation, that he generally 'like[d] to begin with some word to, or recollection of' his 'favourite Poet', recalls his friend's request that he 'say a Word or two on some Passage in Shakespeare that may have come rather new to [him]' whenever he wrote.[107] The presence of Keats in the background to the letter of 28 April is indicative of the extent to which he and Reynolds were 'associated' in each others 'speculations'.[108] This is reflected, not only in 'The Romance of Youth', but in the volume of 1821 as a whole. Here, poems 'chronicling' Reynolds' visits to the country (such as 'Devon' and 'Lines to a Valley') appear alongside poems that had not only contributed to exchanges with Keats in one way or another, but which also date

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104 'Q.', 'The Garden of Florence and Other Poems by John Hamilton', (17 Jun. 1821), 381. See Keats' letters to Reynolds (from Teignmouth) of 25 Mar. and 10 Apr. 1818, LJK, I, 263 and 270.

105 Hudnall, 21-2.

106 Stanza XX, Garden of Florence, 48.

107 Hudnall, 22, Letters, 8 and LJK, I, 132-3.

108 Quoting Keats to Reynolds, 14 Mar. 1818, Ibid. 246.

from the period at which the poets were considering a joint publication. These include the three sonnets on Robin Hood - which (as we shall see) were the product of an exchange that took place at the beginning of February 1818 - and that beginning 'Sweet poets of the gentle antique line' (written shortly afterwards and prompting Keats' 'Blue!—'Tis the life of heaven'). A further sonnet, thought to have been written towards the end of October 1818, draws on the image of Keats' Isabella 'at that part/of all the passion'd hours of her youth;/When her green basil pot by brothers art/Was stolen away'.[109] Above all there are 'The Garden of Florence' and 'The Ladye of Provence', printed at the beginning and end of the volume respectively. As Reynolds explained in the Advertisement, these are the two 'stories from Boccaccio' which 'were to have been associated with other tales from the same source intended to have been written by [Keats]'. However, 'illness on his part, and distracting engagements on mine, prevented us from accomplishing our plan at the time', he continued, 'and Death now, to my deep sorrow, has frustrated it for ever'!'. 'One story he completed', Reynolds added (alluding, of course, to that of 'Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil'), 'and that is to me now the most pathetic poem in existence!'.[110]

The story of 'Isabella', or, as she was known in The Decameron, 'Lisabetta' ('Isabella' being derived from the English translation of 1620, which Keats read in the fifth edition) was another of the tales admired by Hazlitt.[111] As on many subsequent occasions, it featured along with that of the falcon in a letter written to his first wife, Sarah Stoddart, at the beginning of 1808 (cited by Herbert G. Wright as Hazlitt's earliest reference to 'the only writer among the Italians [he could] pretend to any knowledge of').[112] Having had no word from her for 'above a week', Hazlitt

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109 'Sonnet on the picture of a lady', Garden of Florence, 130-1.

110 Ibid. xi-ii.

111 For the translation (the 5th edn. of which dates from 1684) see Herbert G. Wright, Boccaccio in England: from Chaucer to Tennyson (London, 1957), 191, 397.

112 Wright, 344-5. The comment on his knowledge (and admiration) of Boccaccio from Hazlitt's essay 'On Reading Old Books'.

wondered if Sarah had perhaps 'fallen in love with some of the amorous heroes in Boccaccio'. 'Which of them is it', he asked:

> Is it with Chynon who was transformed from a clown in to a lover, and learned to spell, by the force of beauty? Or with Lorenzo, the lover of Isabella whom her three brethren hated...who was a merchant's-clerk? Or with Frederigo Alberighi, an honest gentleman who ran through his fortune, and won his mistress by cooking a fair falcon for her dinner, though it was the only means he had left of getting a dinner for himself?[113]

The first of the 'heroes' to whom Hazlitt referred is 'Cimon' from the story of 'Cimon and Iphigenia'. This, of course, was the subject of a number of paintings by West, including that which, along with the 'Angelica and Medoro', marked the end of his studies at Rome (1763).[114] The popularity of this tale was subsequently noted by Hazlitt in a review of Sismondi's Literature of the South of Europe (1813). The article, which appeared in the Edinburgh Review (June 1815), is said to contain 'the fullest and most coherent exposition of his opinions about Boccaccio'.[115] In it he defended 'the author of the Decameron' against the often-repeated charge of being 'a mere narrator of lascivious tales or idle jests', taking up the 'fine opportunity' that Sismondi had missed of 'doing [him] that justice which has not been done him by the world'.[116] Among the tales that Hazlitt cited in support of his argument were those mentioned in the earlier letter to Sarah Stoddart. He also referred to the 'hero' of another of Procter's 'Dramatic Scenes', and to one of the stories subsequently adapted

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[113] Quoted from The Letters of William Hazlitt, eds Herschel Moreland Sikes, Willard Hallam Bonner and Gerald Lahey (London, 1979), 102-3.

[114] See Galt, I, 142 and II, 6, and von Erffa and Staley's Paintings of Benjamin West, 264-6.

[115] Wright, 347.

[116] 'Sismondi's Literature of the South', Howe, XI, 47.

by Reynolds: [117]

> The truth is, that [Boccaccio] has carried sentiment of every kind to its very highest purity and perfection. By sentiment we would here understand the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely upon itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties or untoward circumstances. In this way, nothing ever came up to the story of Frederigo Alberigi and his falcon....The story of Isabella is scarcely less fine, and is more affecting in the circumstances and the catastrophe. Dryden has done justice to the impassioned eloquence of Sigismunda; but he has not given an adequate idea of the wild preternatural interest of the story of Honoria. Cimon and Iphigene is by no means one of the best, notwithstanding the popularity of the subject. The proof of unalterable affection given in the story of Jeronymo, and the simple touches of nature and picturesque beauty in the story of the two holiday lovers, who were poisoned by tasting of a leaf in the garden at Florence, are perfect masterpieces. The epithet of Divine was well bestowed on this great painter of the human heart.[118]

This passage would be seen again in Hazlitt's Characters of Shakespeare's Plays (1817).[119] This volume was studied by both Keats and Reynolds and was reviewed by the latter in the Champion for 20 and 27 July 1817, where it was introduced as 'the only work ever written on Shakespeare, that can be deemed worthy of Shakespeare'. Further on in the review, Reynolds expressed the opinion that 'young poets...should have a portrait of Nature, Shakespeare's mistress, hung up near their books'. Whilst

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[117] Procter's 'The Broken Heart', published in the Dramatic Scenes of 1819 and based on the tale of 'Jeronymo' (or, in the Italian, 'Girolamo'), and Reynolds' 'The Garden of Florence' from the volume of 1821.

[118] Howe, XI, 47-8.

[119] At the close of the chapter on All's Well That Ends Well.

he 'does not quite say that a young poet should hang a picture of Shakespeare above his books', Jones observes, he 'seems clearly to be thinking' of the following passage from Keats' letter from Carisbrooke of 17-18 April:[120]

> I have unpacked my books, put them in a snug corner—pinned up Haydon—Mary Queen [of] Scotts, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a head of Shakespeare which I had not before seen—It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of; for I like it extremely—Well—this head I have hung over my Books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a french Ambassador.[121]

As we know, Keats had been reading King Lear (and was 'almost certainly' the 'friend who *reads* Shakespeare' cited in the review).[122] Commenting on his copy of Hazlitt's work, which he had acquired by the end of that year, both Bate and Gittings have observed that 'with only one exception, all his underscorings and marginal comments are concentrated in the chapter on [this play]'.[123] The exception is a note found at the close of that on The Tempest, which, Gittings states, 'shows his affection for the author and an appreciation of his social oddities': 'I cannot help seeing Hazlitt like Ferdinand—"in an odd angle of the Isle sitting"—his arms in this sad knot'. Amongst the comments written in the chapter on Lear is one that points to the 'great degree' of 'hieroglyphic visioning' evinced in a passage concerning 'the alternate contraction and dilation of the soul'. According to Gittings, this must have been added at around the time that Keats was writing his review of Edmund Kean for the Champion of 21 December 1817 (standing in for Reynolds who had already left for Exeter). In it

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120 Selected Prose, 113, 115, 452n.187.

121 LJK, I, 130.

122 Selected Prose, 114, 452.n186.

123 Quote taken from Walter Jackson Bate's John Keats (London, 1963), 262. See Robert Gittings' John Keats (London, 1968), 174.

Keats alluded to 'one learned in Shakespearian hieroglyphics', identified by his note in the Characters as Hazlitt (who, incidentally, had himself stood in for Reynolds on a previous occasion).[124] A further indication of the way in which Hazlitt and Kean were associated in his mind at this time is provided by Procter. Recalling Hazlitt's lectures at the Surrey Institution - the first series of which began not long after Keats wrote his review - Procter noted that the poet, 'who used to go there to hear him', had 'remarked to a friend of [his] that he [Hazlitt] reminded him of Kean'.[125]

The introduction of the passage from the review of Sismondi, into the chapter on All's That Ends Well, was occasioned by Hazlitt's observation that the story of this 'and of several others of Shakespear's plays, is taken from Boccac[c]io'. As in the earlier review, he went on to add that the Italian had in fact 'furnished subjects to numberless writers since his time, both dramatic and narrative'.[126] That the Decameron also had great poetic potential would be emphasised the following year, when, in the first of his lectures 'On the English Poets', Hazlitt named it as one of 'three works which come as near to poetry as possible without absolutely being so' (the others being the Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe). 'Chaucer and Dryden have translated some of the [Tales] into English rhyme', he continued, 'but the essence and the power was there before'.[127] Returning to the subject of Dryden's 'alterations from Chaucer and Boccaccio' in a subsequent lecture (in which echoes of the 1815 review could again be heard), Hazlitt stated that:

> His Tales have been, upon the whole, the most popular of his works; and I should think that a translation of some of the other serious tales in Boccaccio and Chaucer, as that of Isabella, the Falcon, of Constance, the Prioress's Tale,

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[124] John Keats, 174. Hazlitt had provided the theatrical criticism for 24 Aug. 1817, Reynolds having been ill at the time.

[125] Procter's account of the lectures cited by Howe, Life of William Hazlitt, 246-7.

[126] Howe, IV, 331-2 and XI, 48.

[127] 'On Poetry in General', Howe, V, 13.

> and others, if executed with taste and spirit, could not fail to succeed in the present day.[128]

The particular 'Tales' to which he referred were those of 'Sigismonda and Guiscardo', 'Theodore and Honoria' and 'Cymon and 'Iphegenia'. These had featured, together with those derived from Chaucer, in Dryden's Fables Ancient and Modern, first published in London in 1700. That they were indeed popular is suggested by the fact that the Fables had been reprinted in 1806 (with further editions following in 1822 and 1885).[129] As he would indicate in his Autobiography, the example of Dryden had been an inspiration to Hunt in his composition of the Story of Rimini, the Preface to which cites him as one of the 'great masters of modern versification'.[130] It may be that a volume of Dryden was one of the books that Hunt had lent to Reynolds when he visited Surrey jail. The latter had certainly been reading Dryden's translations of Virgil when he wrote to Dovaston in February 1815, for he recommended them to him 'as being full of his crispness of style', adding:

> Dryden could write prose almost superior to poetry—I think looking away from the Cecilian Ode that his judgement was greater than his genius—It must ever be remembered what a turn & finish he gave to the English [word illegible]. His wit too was astonishing:—But Alexander's Feast is delicious indeed,—and 'decies repetita placebit ['it will please at the tenth repetition'].[131]

Reflecting upon the 'manner' in which the Story of Rimini was written in his Autobiography, Hunt described it as having been 'as far from the best...as Dryden's

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[128] 'On Dryden and Pope', Howe, 82.

[129] Details from Franklin Samuel Stych's Boccaccio in English: A Bibliography of Editions, Adaptations, and Criticism (Westport, Connecticut and London, 1995), 48.

[130] ALH, II, 169-71, and Rimini, xiv-v.

[131] Letter written from 25 Feb. 1815 onwards, Letters from Lambeth, 133-4.

Flower and the Leaf, from the story in Chaucer which Dryden imitated'.[132] This 'pleasant tale', Dryden's version of which appeared in the Fables Ancient and Modern, had given rise to an exchange of sonnets between Keats and Reynolds early in 1817.[133] It had also provided Thomas Stothard with the subject for one of his entries to the Royal Academy exhibition of 1816.[134] At around the time that this was showing, Reynolds wrote an essay 'On Chaucer' (Champion, 26 May 1816), in which he drew attention to the description of the nightingale's song at the beginning of this 'exquisite poem', declaring it to be 'the most finished description of 'the breathing music of birds and trees'.[135] His admiration of the passage was shared by Hazlitt who had already commented on it in the second part of a 'Fragment' on 'Why the Arts are not Progressive?', published in the Morning Chronicle for 15 January 1814. His remarks on the 'trust in nature' that had enabled Chaucer to describe the scene, had led him to draw some interesting comparisons:

> So Boccaccio...has represented Frederigo Alberigi steadily contemplating his favourite Falcon (the wreck and remnant of his fortune), and glad to see how fat and fair a bird she is, thinking what a dainty repast she would make for his Mistress, who had deigned to visit him in his low cell. So Isabella mourns over her pot of Basil, and never asks for any thing but that. So Lear calls out for his poor fool, and invokes the heavens, for they are old like him. So Titian impressed on the countenance of that young Neopolitan in the Louvre, a look that never passed away. So Nicolas Poussin describes some shepherds

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132 ALH, II, 169-70.

133 Keats' 'This pleasant tale is like a little copse' and Reynolds' 'To Keats On reading his Sonnet written in Chaucer' both dated *c.* 27 Feb. 1817.

134 See Algernon Graves' The Royal Academy of Arts. A Complete Dictionary of Contributors and their work from its Foundation in 1769 to 1904 (London, 1906), 282.

135 Selected Prose, 52-8.

wandering out in a morning of the spring, and coming to a tomb with this inscription, I also was an Arcadian'.[136]

Hazlitt's 'Fragment' would appear, in a revised form, in The Round Table (1817), which Keats read whilst visiting Bailey at Oxford in September 1817.[137] Echoes of the passage on Chaucer would also be heard in the second of his lectures 'On the English Poets, which he delivered for the first time on 20 January 1818.[138] Keats is known to have missed the lecture 'On Chaucer and Spenser'.[139] He was, however, present the following week when Hazlitt opened with another, lengthy, extract from 'Why the Arts are not Progressive', naming Boccaccio as one of those who, having 'lived near the beginning of their arts[,]...perfected, and all but created them'. These 'giant-sons of genius stand indeed upon the earth', he asserted, 'but they tower above their fellows and the long line of their successors, in different ages, does not interpose any object to obstruct their view, or lessen their brightness'. 'In strength and stature they are unrivalled', he added, ' in grace and beauty they have not been surpassed'.[140]

Hazlitt began his course of lectures 'On the English Poets' at the Surrey Institution, 3 Blackfriars Road on the evening of 13 January 1818, continuing, 'on each succeeding Tuesday', until 3 March.[141] According to Thomas Talfourd, they

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[136] Quoted from 'Fragments on Art. Why the Arts are not Progressive? II' (Morning Chronicle, Jan. 15 1814), Howe, XVIII, 9-10.

[137] See Keats to Reynolds, 21 Sept. 1817, in which he reports that he and Bailey 'were reading [Hazlitt's] Table last night', and Keats to Bailey, 29 Oct., in which he quotes the essay 'On Common-place Critics', LJK, I, 166, 173. For the version published in The Round Table, see Howe, IV, 160-4.

[138] 'On Chaucer and Spenser', Howe, 27-9, 386n.27.

[139] See Keats to his brothers, 23-4 Jan. 1818, LJK, I, 214.

[140] 'On Shakespeare and Milton', Howe, V, 44-6, 387n.44. The passage appeared in the first part of the original 'Fragment', published 11 Jan. 1818.

[141] Quoting the advertisement in the Times (8, 9, 10 Jan. 1818), 1.

were delivered before audiences with whom he had but 'an imperfect sympathy', consisting chiefly of:

> Dissenters, who agreed with him in his hatred of Lord Castlereagh, but who 'loved no plays'; of Quakers, who approved him as the opponent of Slavery and Capital Punishment, but who 'heard no music'; of citizens, devoted to the main chance, who had a hankering after 'the improvement of the mind', but to whom his favourite doctrine of its natural disinterestedness was a riddle; of a few enemies, who came to sneer; and a few friends, who were eager to learn and to admire.[142]

Reports in the Examiner indicate that the lectures attracted a good following, nevertheless. This, in spite of competition from, amongst others, Coleridge, who had himself lectured at the Institution in 1812 and was now appearing at a venue in Flower-de-luce Court, off Fetter Lane (these being the lectures cited by Toynbee as having revived interest in Cary's Dante).[143] In a report published 8 March, Hazlitt's 'well-satisfied' audience was said to have 'continued increasing to the last', on which occasion the celebrated Rotunda (capable of housing 'upwards of five hundred persons') had been 'crowded to the very ceiling'.[144] On 23 March, he began a repeat of the course at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, appearing there 'every Monday and Friday'.[145] According to Howe, 'there is contemporary evidence that this

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[142] Talfourd's account quoted from Augustine Birrell's William Hazlitt (London, 1902), 120.

[143] See Dante in English Literature, xxxviii, Frederick Kurzer, 'A History of the Surrey Institution', Annals of Science 57.2 (April, 2000), 109-41 and Herschel Baker's William Hazlitt, 252-3.

[144] See the Examiner (18 Jan., 1 Feb. and 8 Mar. 1818), 39, 76-7, 154, and, for information on the Rotunda, Kurzer, 117-8.

[145] Quoting the advertisement in the Times (20 Mar. 1818), 2.

double delivery was regarded as proof of exceptional success'.[146] It was a success that he was able to build upon with two further courses of lectures, 'On the English Comic Writes' and 'Dramatic Literature in the Age of Elizabeth', delivered at the Surrey Institution before the end of the following year. It seems that Hazlitt had also considered taking the lectures 'On the English Poets' to Edinburgh, in which plan he was encouraged by Blackwood's publication of an 'abstract' of the course written by Patmore.[147] At precisely what point the question of going to Edinburgh arose is unclear however, as Francis Jeffrey, whose opinion Hazlitt sought, had hesitated upon receiving his letter, resolving to 'reflect and inquire' before giving an answer. This had led to 'procrastination and the usual excuse of other more urgent avocations, till at last it was half forgotten, and half driven willingly from [his] conscience'. The subject of the 'former letter' having 'recurred' to Jeffrey by the time Hazlitt wrote to him concerning another matter, he advised him of his doubts regarding the outcome of 'such experiments' as he had 'seemed to meditate' in his reply of 3 May. 'Estimating the merit of your Lectures as highly as I am sincerely inclined to do', he insisted, 'I could by no means insure you against a total failure'.[148] He concluded his remarks by offering to assist Hazlitt should he choose to go ahead with the plan, nevertheless. By this time, however, the Lectures on the English Poets were in print, having been published in London by Taylor and Hessey. Replying to Jeffrey's 'friendly letter' on 12 May, Hazlitt noted that he had 't[aken] the liberty' of enclosing a copy of the volume 'to Mr Henderson' for him. 'You will see by that that there is an end to the question which I troubled you about in my letter', he stated (which would indicate that Jeffrey's remarks were not solely responsible for dissuading Hazlitt from repeating the

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146 Howe, V, 383. See, for example, the Examiner for 29 Mar. 1818, 201

147 Life of William Hazlitt, 253. Blackwood's II (Feb.), 556-62, (Mar.), 679-84 and III (Apr.), 71-5. The abstract concluded with a critical article for which Hazlitt thanked Patmore in a letter dated Mar. 1818, stating that it would be 'of great service, if they insert it entire', Letters of William Hazlitt, 181.

148 Jeffrey's letter quoted from Howe's Life of William Hazlitt, 253-5.

lectures in Edinburgh, as has been suggested).[149] 'I got in all (Lectures and copyright included) 200 guineas for them', he explained. This, he reflected, was 'very well for 10 weeks work'.[150]

The fact that he would 'get money' by doing so, may well have been an important factor in Hazlitt's decision to repeat the lectures at the Crown and Anchor. It was small consolation to Haydon, however, who felt that this was 'letting his talents down a little'.[151] Haydon expressed this opinion at the close of a letter to Keats dated 25 March 1818. The poet, who was then in Teignmouth, had attended the lectures at the Surrey Institution on a regular basis (counting amongst 'the few friends' to whom Talfourd would later refer), after hearing of them from Hazlitt himself during a dinner at Haydon's studio on 18 January. Indeed, he may, like Haydon's pupil William Bewick, who was also present, have been given a ticket of admission by the critic.[152] As he told his brothers in a letter of 21 February 1818, he 'generally [met] with many [he knew] there'.[153] Besides Bewick, these included John Hunt and his son Henry, Charles Jeremiah Wells and 'all the Landseers' (presumably, Charles, Thomas and Edwin - also pupils of Haydon - and their father John who had himself given lectures at the Institution in 1815).[154] They, together with Hazlitt himself, had been among the group that had 'pounced upon' Keats as he arrived at the Institution on

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149 Letters of William Hazlitt, 182-3. See, for example, Herschel Baker, 254.

150 Ibid. 182.

151 Haydon to Keats, 25 Mar. 1818, LJK, I, 259. According to the advertisement in the Times, admittance to the Crown and Anchor lectures cost 5s with tickets for the course priced at 1 guinea (20 Mar. 1818), 2.

152 See Gittings' John Keats, 186, and Keats to Bailey and his brothers, 23 and 23-4 Jan. 1818, LJK, I, 212, 214. Bewick's letter to his family of Feb. 1818, cited by Howe, Life of William Hazlitt, 242.

153 LJK, I, 237.

154 For Landseer's lectures on 'Nature and the Art of Painting, Poetry, Music etc.', see Kurzer, 133, 140.

20 January, having gone for the lecture 'On Chaucer and Spenser' 'an hour too late'.[155] Commenting on the most recent of the lectures (17 February) in his letter to George and Tom, Keats stated that whilst he thought that Hazlitt had given 'a very fine piece of criticism on Swift, Voltaire [a]nd Rabelais', he was 'very disappointed at his treatment of Chatterton'.[156] He referred to the following remarks, made at the end of the lecture 'On Swift, Young, Gray, [and] Collins, etc.':

> I cannot find in Chatterton's works any thing so extraordinary as the age at which they were written. They have a facility, vigour, and knowledge, which were prodigious in a boy of sixteen, but which would not have been so in a man of twenty. He did not shew extraordinary powers of genius, but extraordinary precocity. Nor do I believe he would have written better, had he lived. He knew this himself, or he would have lived. Great geniuses, like great kings, have too much to think of to kill themselves; for their mind to them also 'a kingdom is'. With an unaccountable power coming over him at an unusual age, and with the youthful confidence it inspired, he performed wonders, and was willing to set a seal on his reputation by a tragic catastrophe. He had done his best; and, like another Empedocles, threw himself into Etna, to ensure immortality. The brazen slippers alone remain![157]

It would seem that Keats was not alone in his disappointment. Hazlitt's next lecture, delivered on 24 February, began with an expression of regret that what he had said 'in the conclusion of the last...respecting Chatterton, should have given dissatisfaction to some persons, with whom [he] would willingly agree on all such matters'.[158] This has often been interpreted as an allusion to Keats, who (according to Howe) 'was seeing

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155 Quoting Keats to his brothers, 23, 24 Jan. 1818, LJK, I, 214.

156 21 Feb. 1818, Ibid. I, 237.

157 Howe, V, 122.

158 'On Burns, and the Old English Ballads', Howe, 123.

much of Hazlitt' at this time.[159] 'What I meant was less to call in question Chatterton's genius', Hazlitt explained, 'than to object to the common mode of estimating its magnitude by its prematureness'. Though he had previously chosen to 'pass over the disputes between the learned antiquaries, Dr. Mills, Herbert Croft and Dr. Knox', he now gave some consideration to their various comments on Chatterton, before 'proceed[ing] to the more immediate subject of [his] Lecture, the character and writings of Burns'.[160]

Having begun with an apparent allusion to Keats, Hazlitt concluded his lecture 'On Burns, and the Old English Ballads' with a sonnet written by Reynolds. The sonnet, 'The trees in Sherwood Forest are old and good', was one of the three on the subject of Robin Hood subsequently published in the Garden of Florence. Hazlitt is thought to have quoted it from John Hunt's Yellow Dwarf, in which all three sonnets had appeared the previous Saturday (21 February).[161] As Keats indicated in a letter to his brothers of 14 February, Reynolds had recently produced a number of 'very capital articles' for the Dwarf on the subject of 'popular Preachers', having apparently relinquished his post at the Champion to Charles Dilke at the beginning of January.[162] The articles, entitled 'Pulpit Oratory', appeared on 7, 14 and 28 February, bearing the signature 'Caius' (by which name Keats had addressed Reynolds in the poem 'Hence Burgundy, Claret & port', written 31 January 1818).[163] A further, unsigned, article in the series, published on 4 April, has been identified as the work of Hazlitt, a leading contributor to the Yellow Dwarf since it began on 3 January (at which period he too had ceased writing for the Champion).[164] Reynolds' articles have been shown to have

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159 Ibid. 395. See Howe's Life of William Hazlitt, 243, and Rollins' note (quoting Dorothy Hewlett's Life of John Keats) to the letter of 21 Feb., LJK, I, 237.

160 Howe, V, 122 and 123-7.

161 Yellow Dwarf, 64. See Howe's note on the lecture, V, 396.

162 LJK, I, 228 and, for his departure from the Champion, LJHR, 128.

163 LJK, I, 220-1 and 228n.9.

164 See Jones, Selected Prose, 436, 458-61.

been strongly influenced by the critic, who had himself written on 'the Clerical Character'.[165] A passage in the second (on 'The Rev. Daniel Wilson, A.M.'), confirms that Reynolds attended at least one of Hazlitt's lectures at the Surrey Institution, which he had first visited during its opening season, some nine years earlier, hearing a 'useful and amusing' lecture 'upon Electricity':[166]

> We witnessed a curious instance of this enjoyment, at hearing of the ignorance of their fellow creatures, in a set of people assembled at a lecture the other evening. The Lecturer read the following lines, among others, of Cowper's: -
>
> Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
>
> A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew.
>
> And his audience instantaneously burst into a joyous applause at the Frenchman's ignorance.[167]

The lecture in question was that 'On Thomson and Cowper', delivered on 10 February. Keats was also present and described it in the letter to his brothers of 14 February as having contained 'an unmerciful licking' of Crabbe.[168] This, incidentally, appeared in the Yellow Dwarf the following week (21 February), the first of two extracts from the lectures to be published in that paper.[169] At least two of the sonnets printed later

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[165] Ibid. Hazlitt's articles 'On the Clerical Character' appeared in the Yellow Dwarf for 24 and 31 Jan. and 7 Feb. 1818.

[166] See Reynolds to Dovaston, 31 Dec. 1808, Letters from Lambeth, 29. The first course of lectures - as recorded by Kurzer - were delivered by J. Jackson, on the subject of 'Experimental Philosophy', Appendix, 139.

[167] Selected Prose, 219-20. The same incident features in Talfourd's account.

[168] LJK, I, 227.

[169] 'Character of Crabbe, From Hazlitt's Lectures on Poetry, delivered at the Surrey Institution', Yellow Dwarf, 61-2. A further extract from the final lecture 'On the Living Poets', appeared on 7 Mar. under the heading 'On the Lake School of Poetry'.

in the same issue were written before this date. 'With coat of Lincoln green, and mantle too' and the sonnet read by Hazlitt had made up the 'dish of Filberts' sent to Keats, by way of 'a refreshment', at the beginning of the month (the nut metaphor, as Jones points out, recalling Reynolds' depiction of William Lisle Bowles 'laboriously engaged in filling fourteen nut-shells' in the earlier 'Pilgrimage of Living Poets'). Keats had responded to the sonnets of his 'Coscribbler' by gathering 'a few Catkins' of his own in the shape of the poem 'No! those days are gone away'. This was written into his letter of 3 February, in which (agreeing with Hazlitt) he declared the sonnet on Sherwood Forest to be the best of those that he had seen. The letter also contained his 'Lines on the Mermaid Tavern', a copy of which Reynolds had requested.[170] Both the 'Lines' and the poem on Robin Hood were subsequently published in Keats' Lamia volume of 1820. The volume also featured his adaptation from the Decameron, 'Isabella; or, The Pot of Basil', which he is thought to have begun working on at around this time.

It was on the evening of 3 February 1818 that Hazlitt delivered the lecture 'On Dryden and Pope' in which he recommended 'Isabella' as a tale likely 'to succeed in the present day'.[171] Writing in the Times Literary Supplement for 19 March 1925, H. W. Garrod noted that his 'attention was first called to the significance of this passage' by D. Nichol Smith. 'When we remember Keats's extravagant praise of Hazlitt's "depth of taste"', he continued (referring to his letter to Haydon of 10 January 1818), 'it is difficult not to think that we owe 'Isabella' to the hint given in this lecture'.[172] Bate agreed that when he began the poem 'in early February' Keats was 'probably following up a suggestion he had heard in one of Hazlitt's lectures'.[173] However, in stating that he and Reynolds had discussed 'bringing out a book of short narrative poems' based on stories from Boccaccio 'back in the winter', he seems to

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[170] Keats to Reynolds, 31 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1818, Ibid. 219, 223-5 and LJHR, 138-9.

[171] Howe, V, 82.

[172] See the letter headed 'Keats and Timotheus', 199.

[173] John Keats, 310.

suggest that the actual project was conceived independently of this.[174] Sidney Colvin also attributed the idea of a joint volume to 'certain reading and talk in the Hunt circle', referring, in particular, to discussions between Keats, Reynolds and Hunt.[175] Commenting on the latter in his diary for 1817, Haydon recalled having once found him, in the company of 'some inferior adorer', 'reading & shouting a story from Boccac[c]io with a vivacity'.[176] Further evidence of Hunt's having encouraged his friends to read the Decameron is found in a letter written to Mary Shelley on 4 August 1818:

> Shelley told me once he would read Boccaccio. Pray make him do so now, especially the tales of the Falcon; of the Pot of Basil; of the king who came to kiss the young girl that was sick for love of him; and of the lover who returned and found his mistress married on account of false reports of him, and who coming in upon her at night-time, and begging her to let him lie down a little by her side, without disturbing her husband, quietly broke his heart there.[177]

The passage is also notable in that it features four of the five tales subsequently adapted by Procter (who, as we shall see, is considered to have produced much of his Italianate work 'under the inspiration of' Hunt).[178] According to Colvin, Keats had 'take[n] up the idea of a volume of metrical tales from Boccaccio' having been

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174 John Keats, 310.

175 John Keats: his Life and Poetry, His Friends, Critics and After-Fame, 3rd edn. (London, 1920), 333, 389.

176 See the entries dated 20-22 Jan. and 13 Oct. 1817, II, 82-3, 135.

177 Correspondence, I, 123.

178 'A Sicilian Story' (1820), The Falcon, a Dramatic Sketch' (1820), 'Love Cured by Kindness' (1819) and 'The Broken Heart' (1819). See, for example, Wright's Boccaccio in England, 414, and the entry for Procter in the DNB XLVI (1896), 417.

temporarily diverted by this 'reading and talk' from both the writing of Endymion and his plans for the story of Hyperion.[179] This brings to mind the poet's letter to Bailey of 8 October 1817 in which he ended his argument in favour of 'endeavour after a long Poem' with the question: 'Did our great Poets ever write short Pieces? I mean in the shape of Tales', adding 'This same invention seems indeed of late Years to have been forgotten as a Poetical excellence'.[180] This would tend to support suggestions that the idea for the project may have arisen prior to Hazlitt's lecture on 'Dryden and Pope', rather than as a direct result of it, as some critics have argued.[181] Indeed, assuming the date of Richard Woodhouse's transcript to be correct, there seems to be no obvious mention of it in Keats' letter to Reynolds of 3 February 1818 (though, as Gittings points out, the remarks on 'Wordsworth &c' which take up much of it clearly echo the previous week's lecture 'On Shakespeare and Milton').[182] Nevertheless, it has long been assumed that Keats did hear the lecture 'On Dryden and Pope'.[183] As we have seen, both he and Reynolds would, in any case, have read at least some of the earlier writings upon which Hazlitt drew in his comments on the 'serious tales in Boccaccio'. They may even have had an opportunity to see the manuscript of the lecture itself.

That Reynolds, at least, had been able to read the lectures 'On the English Poets' before they went to press is suggested by a letter to James Hessey dated March 1818. 'Confined to [his] room, with a heavy cold & fever', he wrote to enquire if the publisher 'could..., to beguile the time, lend [him] Hazlitt's first lecture' ('On Poetry in General'), provided that it was not 'in hand, or at the Printers'. He also asked if there was 'a proof of Keats' Poem' that he could see.[184] The poem in question was

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179 Colvin, 389.

180 LJK, I, 170.

181 See, for example, Gittings' John Keats, 190.

182 Ibid. 186-9 and LJK, I, 223&n.

183 See, for example, Rollins' 'calendar' of 'Events in the Life of Keats', Ibid. I, 39.

184 Letters, 11-12.

Endymion, the third book of which Keats had completed before leaving for Teignmouth at the beginning of the month.[185] According to the notes of Richard Woodhouse, it was there, 'at the suggestion of J.H.R', that he wrote 'Isabella'.[186] In fact, Keats had begun work on the poem whilst still in London, though the precise point at which he took it up again is unclear. He was certainly 'anxious to get Endymion printed that [he] may forget it and proceed'. However, there was still much to be done when he wrote to John Taylor on 27 February. Writing to Reynolds on 14 March (by which time he had 'copied [his] fourth Book'), Keats again expressed the wish that it was 'all done', allowing him to 'make [his] mind free for something new'. This was echoed in a letter to Haydon, sent just over a week later. As in the earlier letter, Keats' did not specify what that 'something new' was to be. However, 'italian tales' were evidently in his thoughts, for these were among the 'fine things' that he deemed Hunt to have 'damned', along with 'Hampstead...Masks and Sonnets'.[187] Writing to Reynolds again on 25 March, Keats indicated that it was his intention to 'take refuge' in 'new Romance'.[188] This reference is understood to be a reference to 'Isabella' (which, by 10 April, may well have been doing for Keats what the composition of The Story of Rimini had done for Hunt, turning his mind away from the oppressive 'region of Mists, Game Laws indemnity Bills &c' and towards the more congenial climate of Italy).[189] On 27 April, Keats informed Reynolds that he had 'written for [his] folio Shakespeare, in which there [was] the first few stanzas of his "Pot of Basil"'. 'I have the rest here finished', he added, 'and will copy the whole out fair shortly'. Having first assured him that 'the Compliment [was] paid to Boccace, whether [they] publish or no', he proceeded to urge Reynolds not to think of his own

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185 See Hessey to Taylor, 6 Mar. 1818, Keats Circle, I, 12.

186 Woodhouse's note cited by Jones, LJHR, 142.

187 Letter to Haydon dated 21 Mar. 1818, LJK, I, 239, 246, 251-2.

188 Ibid. I, 263

189 See Miriam Allot, John Keats, The Complete Poems (London, 1970), 326n.111 and, for the reference to Italy, Keats to Reynolds, 10 Apr. 1818, LJK, I, 269.

part in the project until he was fully recovered. 'Then put your passion into it', he continued, 'and I shall be bound up with you in the shadows of mind, as we are in our matters of human life'.[190]

It would seem that Reynolds heeded Keats' advice. As we know, critics have differed as to the exact timing of the project's conception, and it has been suggested that, like Keats, Reynolds began writing his 'stories from Boccaccio' at the beginning of February 1818.[191] According to Jones, however, he may not have begun work on either of his poems until after he had written to Keats, on 14 October 1818, advising him to go ahead and publish 'Isabella' alone as he could 'never write anything now'.[192] He had evidently finished both 'The Garden of Florence' and 'The Ladye of Provence' before 9 September 1819, Jones argues, 'because he said in his dedication, which he must have written after the poems, that he was writing when he was "twenty-four,/And *upwards*."'. The 'italicizing of *upwards* points to the spring of 1819 as the time of completion', he continues, 'but he may have begun them at the close of 1818' (which, incidentally, would coincide with Reynolds' revisiting of Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets in the review of his third series, 'On the Comic Genius of England', for the Scots Magazine).[193] Jones suggests that, since Keats 'persist[ed] in not publishing The Pot of Basil' (considering it to be 'too smokeable'), Reynolds may have thought that a joint volume remained a possibility. Even if this were not the case, he argues, he would have needed 'substantial poems' if he wished to publish a selection of his shorter pieces, a number of which had featured in a book of manuscripts given to John Taylor at some point before the end of November 1818.[194] According to

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[190] LJK, I, 274-5.

[191] Bate suggests that Reynolds may have begun 'one or two before he dropped his literary ambitions in mid-February and turned to the law', John Keats, 310.

[192] Quoting Reynolds' letter of 14 Oct. 1818, LJK, I, 376-7.

[193] LJHR, 157, and Selected Prose, 231-3.

[194] See Jones on Reynolds' discussions with Taylor, LJHR, 156-7, and Taylor to Woodhouse (to whom the book had been passed), 23 Nov. 1818, Keats Circle, I, 63-5.

Jones, Taylor and Hessey was 'probably' the 'other unnamed publisher' alluded to which Archibald Constable alluded in his letter to the poet of 15 January 1820:

> We have every wish to do your will as to this said favourite—but to be honest, as I told you before we have a hor[r]er at poetry, and decline it at all hands, except where the author pays the paper and the print—and this resolution rises from experience—no one poem that we have published having done any [good?] saving Walter Scott —the public are gorged with Poetry—and the trade will not look at it we therefor return your M.S. with this—*but when we do this we are happy you have another channel for it*—as the disappointment will not be so great [my italics].[195]

The manuscript to which Constable refers is understood to be that of the Garden of Florence, and not that of the Fancy, the greater part of which was apparently 'written after this date'.[196] The latter volume was published (anonymously) by Taylor and Hessey in June of that year. The Garden of Florence, however, remained unpublished until the following May, when it was brought out (under the name 'John Hamilton') by John Warren of Old Bond Street. According to Jones, it is not clear why Reynolds 'chose the otherwise unknown Warren...rather than Taylor and Hessey.[197] However, the answer may lie in the fact that Warren had recently become the publisher of Procter, whose Sicilian Story, with Diego Montilla and Other Poems (containing his versions of the tales of 'Isabella' and 'The Falcon') entered its third edition in the same year.

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[195] Constable's letter quoted from LJHR, 185.

[196] Ibid. 343n.1

[197] Ibid. 226.

'Labourers in the same vineyard'

As letters to both Reynolds and Fanny Brawne reveal, Procter had sent A Sicilian Story to Keats soon after its publication at the beginning of 1820.[198] This was followed, on 27 February, by a copy of his first book, the Dramatic Scenes (1819), in which were published his versions of the tales of Andreuola and Gabriotto (IV.6), Girolamo and Salvestra (IV.8) and Lisa and King Peter (X.7).[199] Commenting on this 'specimen of great politeness' in a further letter, to Charles Dilke, Keats noted that Procter had in fact given the Dramatic Scenes to Hunt 'some time ago' with the intention that he forward it to him on his behalf.[200] However, Hunt had forgotten to do this , leaving Procter with the impression, Keats imagined, that he was 'a very neglectful fellow' in not acknowledging his gift.[201] What we do know is that on the 'two or three' occasions on which he saw him 'before his departure for Italy' (September 1820), Procter found Keats 'very pleasant' and unaffected. Recording his 'recollections' of the poet some forty-six years later, he noted that 'he was always ready to hear and to reply; to discuss, to reason, to admit; and to join in serious talk or common gossip'. 'Indeed', he declared, 'it would be difficult to discover a man with a more bright and open countenance'.[202] It seems that it was Hunt who introduced the poets, having himself met Procter through William Read, author of 'a poem, founded on an Irish legend, called "The Hill of Caves"', and - like Procter- a regular visitor at

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198 Letters dated 27 and 28 Feb. 1820 respectively, LJK, II, 267-8.

199 Rollins notes that Procter also sent his third publication, Marcian Colonna. An Italian Tale (1820), 'along with a letter probably written on June 30'. Ibid. II, 267n.

200 Letter dated 4 Mar. 1820, Ibid. II, 271-2.

201 Having resolved to 'do what [he could] to make him sensible of the esteem [he had] for his kindness' Keats duly presented Procter with an inscribed copy of his Lamia volume. See Keats to Fanny Brawne, 27 Feb. 1820, LJK, II, 267&n.

202 Autobiographical Fragment, 201.

the Frith Street lodgings of George Croly.[203] According to Procter's 'Recollection', his friendship with Hunt had commenced in 1817. In fact, it was at least a year after this, as is confirmed by a letter to Mary Shelley of 9 March 1819 in which Hunt reported that he had 'made a very pleasant acquaintance in a young man by the name of Procter, who was a little boy at Harrow when Lord Byron was there' and who had written 'the verses in the *Pocket-Book* signed "P. R."' (this being a reference to the Literary Pocket-Book; or, A Companion for the Lover of Nature and Art, published towards the end of the previous year).[204] It was at 'No. 8 York Buildings' - to which the Hunts had moved at the beginning of August 1818 - that Procter recalled having 'first visited' him.[205] 'Shortly after' this, he states, 'I first met Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Peacock, Walter Coulson, and others [possibly Keats?] at supper there'.[206] Whilst Procter's own memory is vague, and, at times contradictory, on this point, this would support Patmore in his belief that the 'personal intimacy' of Procter and Hazlitt had commenced 'almost immediately after' the appearance of the Dramatic Scenes in the spring of 1819.[207]

Having noted his introduction to Procter in the letter of 9 March, on 23 May 1819, Hunt presented this 'new candidate for the laurel' to the readers of the Examiner.[208] The review of the Dramatic Scenes is in this, and indeed other respects, reminiscent of the 'Young Poets' article of 1816 in which Hunt had drawn attention to three other 'young aspirants' with whom he had recently become acquainted (Shelley,

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203 Procter recalls that whilst he 'soon became intimate' with Hunt, Croly 'did not cultivate [his] society' after Read had introduced them. Autobiographical Fragment. 133.

204 Correspondence, I, 128. Procter would also contribute to subsequent editions of the Pocket-Book.

205 Autobiographical Fragment, 195.

206 Ibid. 195-6.

207 My Friends and Acquaintance, III, 161.

208 'Dramatic Scenes and other Poems, by Barry Cornwall', 333-4.

Reynolds and Keats). In his introduction to that article Hunt had hailed the rise of 'a new school of poetry' which 'promise[d] to extinguish the French one' which had 'prevailed...since the time of Charles the 2d':

> It began with something excessive, like most revolutions, but this gradually wore away; and an evident aspiration after real nature and original fancy remained, which called to mind the finer times of the English Muse...it's [*sic*] only object being to restore the same love of Nature, and of *thinking* instead of mere *talking* , which formerly rendered us real poets, and not merely versifying wits, and bead-rollers of couplets.[209]

Now, he began by declaring that 'the time [was]...completely gone for the French school of poetry'. 'One or two writers may feel interested in wishing us to call it back', he observed, referring, in particular, to the recent 'vituperative injunctions' of 'Mr. Mathias' (author of the anti-Della Cruscan Pursuits of Literature). However this could not be, for 'almost every body ha[d] discovered that wit does not constitute poetry; nor pithy thoughts, set to monotonous music, versification'.[210] Procter's book was itself 'a very pleasant evidence of the great and popular revolution which opinion ha[d] undergone in this respect':

> The author is evidently not quick to follow innovation, or court hostility; but Nature has furnished him with a fanciful and sensitive mind; and he is disposed to fall in with every thing that does her honour, and that tends to restore her long-forgotten worship.[211]

Citing the example of Keats, who had himself 'burst...upon [the public] like a shape

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209 'Young Poets' (1 Dec. 1816), 761-2.

210 'Dramatic Scenes and other Poems', 333.

211 Ibid.

out of the old world of imagination', Hunt argued that 'when the question... comes between real poetry and false, the former has a natural tendency to make it's [*sic*] way among a rising generation'. For 'it's [*sic*] pleasures, like those of youth', he explained, 'are among the best affections of the heart and the beauties of out-of-door enjoyment'. In his opinion it was 'among both these united' that Procter was 'almost invariably to be found'; his knowledge and admiration of the 'old dramatists' being that of a 'true disciple' rather than a 'servile imitator'.[212]

Much of Hunt's praise of the Dramatic Scenes was echoed in a review of this 'very delightful volume' published in Blackwood's the following month, the author declaring Procter to be 'a worthy and hopeful disciple' of his 'illustrious masters', the 'elder dramatists'. Introducing him as 'a chance man of originality and genius' amidst a 'crowd of versifiers' and 'common-place prosers', the critic declared that he had 'formed a friendship with this young poet' and did 'not fear to see him, in good time, crowned with the world's applause'. Having first commended him for the 'simple, manly, and dignified modesty' of his preface, he then noted that the 'ignorant[ly] arrogan[t]' and sottish[ly] self-sufficien[t] Cockney School' were 'desirous of investing Mr Cornwall with the insignia of their order'.[213] The coming years would see 'Baby Cornwall' dismissed in Blackwood's as a 'Cockney underscrub' who 'sympathize[d] too closely with the lieges of Leigh the First'.[214] For the time being, however, they chose to defend him against this 'investiture', a subsequent review of the Literary Pocket-Book for 1819-1820 declaring 'one...even the very tamest and most imitative of' his 'dramatic scenes' to be 'worth both "The two dead Eternities" of the Cockneys'

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[212] 'Dramatic Scenes and other Poems', 333.

[213] Dramatic Scenes and other Poems, by Barry Cornwall' (Jun. 1819), 310-316.

[214] Quoting: 'Noctes Ambrosianæ. No. I' (Mar. 1822), [362], and 'Remarks on Mr Barry Cornwall's New Poems [The Flood of Thessaly, The Girl of Provence, and other Poems]' (May 1823), 534. There are many such references to Procter during this period, the representation of him as a 'small poet' echoing earlier attacks upon Keats.

(Keats and Hunt) put together.[215] Whilst they had recently chided him for having 'written lines on the story of Rimini', the Blackwood's critics were equally hesitant in recognising the second of Hunt's 'Young Poets' as one of this 'order'.[216] This may be accounted for, in some degree, by the fact that, throughout the early part of the year, their proprietor had earnestly sought to bring Reynolds within the Blackwood's fold, John Gibson Lockhart recommending him as 'certainly a very promising writer' who 'might surely do better things than copying the Cockneys'.[217] That his poetry was 'situated in the land of *Cockaigne* ' would, however, be noted elsewhere, the critic for the Gentleman's Magazine, finding the description of 'the Garden in "The Romance of Youth" to be as 'insignificant' as that of 'the Morning at Ravenna' (surely an allusion to the opening of Hunt's Story of Rimini?).[218] This was also true of Procter who had featured in many of the reviews of the earlier Lamia volume (1820). Among these was the notice printed in the Monthly Magazine the previous September in which he was identified as a 'labourer...in the same vineyard' as Keats and 'the author of Rimini'.[219]

Whilst he believed their poetic labours' to be 'of the same genus', the critic for the Monthly Magazine discovered 'more depth and intenseness of thought and feeling' in the writings of Keats than in those of 'his master, or...fellow pupil' (thereby agreeing with the author of an earlier review in which it was asserted that 'whatever

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215 John Wilson, 'Literary Pocket-Book' (Dec. 1819), 240.

216 See the passage concerning the sonnet to Reynolds published in Hunt's Foliage (1818) in 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. VI' (Oct. 1819), 75.

217 See Jones's discussion of this 'attempt to secure Reynolds's pen for the Tory cause' in LJHR, 162. As he points out, Keats had noted that 'Blackwood wanted very much to see [Reynolds]' in a letter to George and his wife dated 14 Feb.-3 May 1819, LJK, II, 78.

218 'The Garden of Florence, and other Poems, By John Hamilton.' (Oct. 1821), 338-341.

219 Notice quoted from Reiman, C, II, 665.

...his faults', Keats was 'no *Della Crusca* poet').[220] 'It is likewise more original poetry than theirs', he added, 'Mr. C. [being] compounded of imitation—of Shakespeare and of...Hunt'.[221] Though of a somewhat less complimentary nature, this latter statement recalls Francis Jeffrey's review of A Sicilian Story, in which 'the natural bent of [Procter's] genius' was said to be 'more like that of...Hunt than any other author':

> Mr. Cornwall's...style is chiefly moulded...on the pattern of Shakespeare, Marlow, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger. He has also copied something from Milton and Ben Jonson, and the amorous cavaliers of the Usurpation—and then, passing disdainfully over all the immediate writers, has flung himself fairly into the arms of Lord Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Leigh Hunt'.[222]

This, in turn, brings to mind the following passage concerning his former 'school-fellow' in Byron's letter to Murray of 4 January 1821:

> —of what I have read of [Procter's] works I liked the *dramatic* sketches—but thought his Sicilian Story—& Marcian Colonna in rhyme—quite spoilt by I know not what affectation of Wordsworth—and Hunt—and Moore—

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[220] '...for though he is frequently involved in ambiguity, and dressed in the affectation of quaint phrases, we are yet sure of finding...proof of deep thought and energetic reflection', Monthly Review (Jul. 1820), quoted from Reiman, C, II, 705. Compare this with the review for the Edingburgh Magazine (Oct. 1817) in which certain passages of his Poems were declared 'worthy only of the Rosa Matildas whom the strong-handed Gifford put down', Keats: The Critical Heritage, ed. G. M. Matthews (New York, 1971), 74.

[221] 'Literary and Critical Proemium', quoted from Reiman, C, II, 166.

[222] The review, published in the Edinburgh Review for Jan. 1820, qouted from the Autobiographical Fragment, 45-8.

and Myself—all mixed up into a kind of Chaos.[223]

Byron had already assured the publisher in a letter sent the previous September, that if ever he did 'come amongst' them again he would 'give [them] such a "Baviad and Mæviad"[,] not as good as the old—but even *better merited*". 'There never was such a Set as your ragamuffins', he declared, 'what with the Cockneys and the Lakers—and the *followers* of Scott and Moore and Byron—you are in the very uttermost decline and degradation of Literature'.[224] Shelley, to whom Byron would address further remarks on this '*second-hand* school of poetry', agreed that 'The Bavii and Mævii of the day' were indeed 'fertile'.[225] Complaining of the 'trash' with which his boxes were invariably 'packed' in a letter to Peacock, dated 21 March 1821, he declared that he would 'much rather...receive political, geological, and moral treatises, than this stuff in *terza*, *ottava*, and *tremilesima rima*'. Repeating what he said concerning the '*ottava rima* ' of 'Barry Cornwall', in a previous letter, he added that 'Procter's verses', in particular, had 'enrage[d him] far more that of Codrus did Juvenal, and with better reason'.[226]

In the 'Advertisement' to the new (third) edition of A Sicilian Story, published in 1821, Procter acknowledged that 'the two poems written in the octave rhyme' had 'been objected to..., even by critics who were evidently kindly disposed towards the book'.[227] Indeed, whilst he yet maintained that Procter had done 'much that not many

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223 Similar comments concerning the detrimental effect of Procter's association with 'the detestable Schools of the day' may be found in Byron's letter to Murray of 7 Jun. and 9 Nov. 1820 and 12 Sept. 1821, BLJ, VII, 113, 225, and VIII, 56, 207.

224 Letter dated 11 Sept. 1820, Ibid. VII, 175.

225 See Byron to Shelley, 26 Apr. 1821, Ibid. VIII, 103.

226 The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. eds Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck. 10 vols. (London and New York, 1965), X, 234, 248-9.

227 A Sicilian Story with Diego de Montilla and Other Poems, 2nd edn. (London, 1821), vi.

[would] easily equal', the author of a review of the volume published in Blackwood's thought them to be 'on the whole not very felicitous'.[228] The poems in question were 'Diego Montilla. A Spanish Tale' and 'Gyges', the first of which began with an account of the metre in which it was written and the problems this presented:

> The octave rhyme (Ital. *ottava rima*)
> Is a delightful measure made of ease
> Turn'd up with epigram, and, tho' it seem a
> Verse that a man may scribble when he please,
> Is somewhat difficult; indeed, I deem a
> Stanza like Spenser's will be found to tease
> Less, or heroic couplet; there the pen
> May touch and polish and touch up again.
>
> But, for the octave-measure - it should slip
> Like running water o'er its pebbled bed,
> Making sweet music, (Here I own I dip
> In Shakespeares for simile) and be Fed
> Freely, and then the poet must not nip
> The line, nor square the sentence, nor be led
> By old, approved poetic canons; no,
> But give his words the slip, and let them go'.[229]

The Blackwood's critic had presented both poems as 'aim[ing] at those sudden contrasts and mixtures of imagery and sentiment characteristic of the old models, and of Byron, Frere, and Wastle'.[230] In the second, however, Procter insisted that it had

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228 'A Sicilian Story, with other Poems; by Barry Cornwall' (Mar. 1820), 643, 647.

229 'Diego de Montilla', A Sicilian Story, 61-2.

230 'A Sicilian Story, with other Poems', 647.

been his wish to 'indite' his tale 'Without delaying to the left and right,/To see how others touch this style and metre', adding 'I'll even keep Lord Byron out of sight'.[231] The reference to Byron was, presumably, made in allusion to Beppo. A Venetian Story (1818), described in the Yellow Dwarf, soon after its publication, as a 'means of conveying a humorous description of Italian manners, and some touches of severe satire, all in eight-line stanzas'.[232] Reynolds (who, as we know, was a contributor to the Yellow Dwarf) had also remarked upon this poem in his preface to 'The Fields of Tothill', a 'Fragment' in the ottava rima incorporated into The Fancy of 1820. Writing under the guise of the editor of 'Peter Corcoran', he explained that 'the present Canto' had been 'written before that clever, rambling little story, yclept Beppo, appeared', However, he added, 'I believe that Corcoran had seen the national specimen which Messrs. Whistlecraft of Stowmarket had published,—and that he chose his measure from that facetious performance'.[233]

The work of John Hookam Frere, the 'specimen' to which Reynolds referred had featured, together with William Stewart Rose's Court of the Beasts in Ugo Foscolo's essay on the 'Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians', published in the Quarterly Review the previous year. There, both authors were credited with having 'infused a new life' into their Italians models (Pulci and Casti, respectively), the author of Whistlecraft deemed to have been particularly successful in mastering the difficult task of uniting 'the playfulness of wit to good poetry'.[234] By way of contrast, Foscolo cited the example of Fortequerri who was unable to achieve this 'without degenerating...into vulgarity', his work symptomatic of 'the rapid decline of Italian poetry, and...amazing corruption of the Italian language' which had followed 'immediately after the death of Petrarch' (it was Forteguerri, incidentally, who later

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231 'Gyges', A Sicilian Story, 134.

232 Notice published 28 Mar. 1818, 101-2.

233 The Fancy: A Selection from the Poetical Remains of the late Peter Corcoran, of Grays Inn, Student at Law, with a Brief Memoir of his Life (London, 1820), 51-2.

234 'Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians' (Apr. 1819), 487, 497, 506, 508.

gave rise to Hunt's comments on the Arcadians in the Book of Beginnings, the poet having been a member of that society).[235] Further on in the review, Foscolo took up the defence of Tasso, whose fame the 'ungenerous' Florentines had 'tried to blast...because his native soil was not on the banks of the Arno, and because....he would not submit to the rule of those far-famed trifles the Della Cruscan academicians'.[236] This anticipates the prefatory note to the translation of a letter, published in Blackwood's for October 1821 in which the director of the Milanese Biblioteca Italiana set out his reasons for 'lowering the Tuscans in the ranks of modern literature':

> The infinite superiority attained by the Tuscan writers, over all other Italian authors in the early ages of their literature, and successfully maintained for a period of four hundred years, had inspired a general belief that the highest excellence in composition, and the utmost originality in point of thought, must, with few exceptions be sought for in vain at a distance from the banks of the Arno. In Tuscany more especially, the pride of a noble literary ancestry had blinded all classes to the decline of their ancient fame, and insensible to the long and death-like torpidity of the Academicians, they still continued to dream over the time when the chiefs of the famous "Quatordici Ambasciatori" might be numbered among the citizens of Florence'.[237]

The reference to the 'death-like torpidity' of the Academicians recalls the image of the 'Tuscan Muse' in Bertie Greatheed's 'A Dream', in which, roused from her 'death-like sleep', she laments the passing of her once 'num'rous' band of 'Votaries'.[238] Greatheed's Italian associates in the Florence Miscellany are in fact named in the

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235 'Narrative and Romantic Poems of the Italians', 503, 518.

236 Ibid. 549.

237 'On the Decline of the Tuscan Ascendancy in Italian Literature', 328.

238 Florence Miscellany, 7, 8.

Blackwood's letter, particular praise falling to Ippolito Pindemonte', who formed another link in the 'chain of handshakes' noted in Chapter II, when on 4 June 1817, he visited Byron at his Venetian residence.[239] Pindemonte having apparently taken the opportunity to 'enquire...after his old Cruscan friends[,] Parsons—Greathead—Mrs Piozzi—and Merry', Byron had taken great delight in informing him that 'they were "all gone dead"—& damned by a satire more than twenty years ago'.[240]

As we shall see in the next chapter, however, the 'school...swept away by Gifford was soon to re-emerge in the shape of the 'modern *Della Crusca[ns*], with Byron, himself placed at their head.[241]

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[239] 'On the Decline of the Tuscan Ascendancy', 330.

[240] Byron to Murray, 4 Jun. 1817, BLJ, V, 233-4.

[241] Quoting Maginn's 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

CHAPTER V

'VERSE AND PROSE FROM THE SOUTH': THE LIBERAL AND HUNT'S BACCHUS IN TUSCANY

Adverting to 'the *Della Crusca*'

On 26 April 1821 Byron wrote to Shelley responding to reports that Keats had 'died at Rome of the Quarterly Review'.[1] Keats - like Procter, who was discussed in the previous chapter - had been 'spoilt by the detestable Schools of the day'.[2] Shelley, on the other hand, was 'of *no* school'.[3] This, at least, was Byron's opinion. The end of the year would see Shelley presented in Blackwood's as the spokesperson for one of the very 'Schools' to which Byron had alluded. The immediate occasion for this was his response to the 'Killing' of Keats.[4] However, as this section will demonstrate, it may also be regarded as a reaction to his involvement in the Liberal, a project in which Byron was himself deemed to have formed an unfortunate alliance.

Writing to the Shelleys on 12 November 1818, Leigh Hunt commented on the recent 'extravagances' of the '*Quarterly Reviewers* '. Their 'false, furious, and recoiling' attacks upon Shelley, Hazlitt and himself had already been noted in a letter to Mary dated 4 August.[5] He now referred to the article on Endymion, published the following month, in which they had taken to 'abusing Keats at a furious rate'.[6] This

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[1] Quoting Byron's letter to Murray of the same date, BLJ, VIII, 102.

[2] Byron to Murray, 7 Jun. 1820, echoed in the letters of 26 Apr. 1821, Ibid. VII, 113, VIII, 102, 103.

[3] Byron to Shelley, Ibid. VIII, 103.

[4] Byron's term, used in a letter to Murray dated 30 Jul. 1821, Ibid. VIII, 162.

[5] Correspondence, I, 124.

[6] Ibid. 125.

was then assumed to be the work of the Quarterly's editor, William Gifford.[7] 'I made no answer to Gifford myself', Hunt explained,

> partly out of contempt, partly...out of something bordering on a loathing kind of pity, and partly for the sake of setting an example always praised, but seldom or ever practised. I therefore instinctively paid a friend like Shelley the compliment of feeling for *him* , as I felt for myself; but there are limits to forbearance, especially when the task is not one of self-revenge, but of friendship; and as they have sent for his poem from Ollier's to criticise it, I mean, if they (Gifford or others) do not take warning, to buckle on my old rusty armour, and give them such a carbonado as I know I am able to give, and they most capable of feeling.[8]

Hunt had, of course, already given the satirist 'warning' in the Feast of the Poets (1814), portraying him as a 'sour little gentleman' in whose works were found a great many of the faults which he deprecated in others.[9] His motivation in that instance had been the 'pleasant and manly fling' directed at Mrs Robinson in the following lines from the Baviad:

> See Robinson forget her state, and move
> On crutches tow'rds the grave, to 'Light o' Love.[10]

As he would explain in his Autobiography (1850), it was this passage that had hitherto 'put all the gall into anything which [Hunt] 'said...of Gifford'.[11] He had

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[7] In fact, the review was written by John Wilson Croker.

[8] Correspondence, I, 125-6.

[9] Feast of the Poets, 7-8, 58.

[10] Ibid. 60n. Baviad and Mæviad, 10.

[11] ALH, II, 87.

begun to consider the possibility that he might 'say something further' on behalf of those 'whose contempt...[was] not close at hand enough to be effective' when he wrote to Mary.[12] The 'carbonado' threatened in his subsequent letter would eventually be delivered in the shape of Ultra-Crepidarius; A Satire on William Gifford. The satire - which was evidently near completion when Shelley wrote to him on 25 January 1822 insisting that he should not give the critic 'a stripe the more for [his] sake' - did not appear until December 1823, by which time Hunt was himself living in Italy.[13] However, in the introduction to the Preface, it appears as 'the stick which is mentioned in the third number of the Liberal', published the previous April.[14] Hunt referred to the following passage from his own lines 'To a Spider' which suggests that he had indeed postponed the satire's publication in accordance with Shelley's wishes. It would also confirm that it was in his mind as early as 1818:

> Have I, these five years, spared the dog a stick,
> Cut for his special use, and reasonably thick,
> Now, because prose had felled him just before;
> *Then, to oblige the very heart he tore;* [my italics]
> Then, from conniving to suppose him human,
> Two-legg'd, and one that had a serving-woman;
> Then, because someone saw him in a shiver,
> Which, shewed, if not a heart, he had a liver;
> And then because they said the dog was dying,
> His very symptoms being given to lying?[15]

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[12] Correspondence, I, 124.

[13] Shelley asked that Hunt send him his satire when it was printed, Complete Works, X, 351-2.

[14] Ultra-Crepidarius; A Satire on William Gifford (London, 1823), iii.

[15] 'To a Spider Running Across a Room', Liberal, II, No. 3, 177-80.

A further reason for Hunt's having 'spared' the critic, the 'prose' cited at the beginning of the passage is Hazlitt's Letter to William Gifford, Esq. (1819), extracts from which featured in the appendix to Hunt's satire. Hunt noted that Hazlitt had produced 'a masterly character of Gifford' when writing to Mary on 4 August 1818. On 9 March the following year, he informed her that Hazlitt had 'just published his most bitter...letter'.[16] By this time the Shelleys had seen the attacks in the Quarterly Review for themselves. Writing to Peacock on 25 February 1819 Shelley expressed regret that it was probably now too late to 'organ[ise] a review' of the number for September, adding:

> The Quarterly is undoubtedly conducted with talent, great talent, and affords a dreadful preponderance against the cause of improvement. If a band of staunch reformers, resolute yet skilful infidels, were united in so close and constant a league as that in which interest and fanaticism have bound the members of that literary coalition![17]

According to Peacock's notes this passage contained 'the idea which was subsequently intended to be carried out in the Liberal'. The foundations of that project would be laid during Shelley's visit to Byron at Ravenna in August 1821 (apparently, resurrecting a plan which the latter had put to Moore at the close of 1820).[18] In the months immediately prior to this, Shelley made his own answer to 'the savage criticism on...Endymion' published in the Quarterly.[19] This was the poem Adonais, which he described in a letter to the publisher Charles Ollier, dated 8 June 1821, as 'a

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[16] Correspondence, I, 124, 128.

[17] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 34&n.

[18] See Shelley to Hunt, 26 Aug. 1821, Ibid. X, 318, and Byron to Moore, 25 Dec. 1820, BLJ, VII, 253-4. Byron had suggested this visit in the letter of 26 Apr.

[19] Preface to Adonais quoted from The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London, 1929), 426.

lament on the death of poor Keats, with some interposed stabs on the assassins of his peace and of his fame'.[20] Shelley's description of the critics, both here and in his Preface, recalls the image of those 'mercenar[ies]' or 'volunteers' who 'issue forth *muffled*, and "kill men i' the dark!"' in Clarke's Address to that Quarterly Reviewer who touched upon Mr Leigh Hunt's "Story of Rimini' (1816).[21] As was noted in Chapter III, this was itself written in response to an attack lead by Gifford, an attack which was presented both in Hazlitt's Letter and in the Preface to Ultra-Crepidarius as having been driven by his unflattering appearance in the Feast of the Poets.[22] Equally 'savage' in their criticism of both Endymion and Rimini, of course, were Gifford's fellow 'assassins' at Blackwood's. The arrival in 'the realm of Cockaigne' of this fresh instance of 'Folly' would provide them with the occasion for the first in a series of pre-emptive 'stabs' on the Liberal. It would also lead one of their number to 'advert' to Gifford's original victims, the so-called '*Della Crusca*', a 'school' which, it will be remembered, was then believed to have originated in the collaboration of 'a few English...jumbled together' in Italy.[23]

The author of the review of Adonais published in Blackwood's supplement for December 1821, has been identified as William Maginn, a regular contributor to the Magazine since 1819. When reviewing Shelley's Prometheus Unbound, in September 1820, John Gibson Lockhart had found it necessary to say 'a word or two in regard to an accusation' that had lately been brought against the Blackwood's critics 'in some one of the London Magazines':

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[20] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 273.

[21] Clarke, 20-1.

[22] See Howe, IX, 25-6 and Ultra-Crepidarius, iv. Haydon would also attribute 'Gifford's animosity' towards Hunt to the fact Apollo had 'invite[d] him to *Tea*, instead of *Dinner*' when discussing the Story of Rimini with Lord Ebrington on 11 Feb. 1833, Diary, IV, 44-5.

[23] Quoting Maginn's 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696, 697, 700, and Gifford's Introduction to the Baviad and Mæviad, vii.

> He has the audacious insolence to say, that we praise Mr Shelley, although we dislike his principles, just because we know that he is not in a situation of life to be in any danger of suffering pecuniary inconvenience from being run down by critics; and, *vice versa*, abuse Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt, and so forth, because we know that they are poor men.[24]

In their defence, Lockhart asserted that, whilst 'the principles and purposes of [his] poetry' were to be regretted, it was 'impossible to conceal' the fact that Shelley was 'destined to leave a great name behind him'. Extending the compliment which had been paid to Byron following the infamous 'dedication of Rimini', he insisted that as 'a man of genius' he was 'not merely superior, either to Mr Hunt, or to Mr Keats', he was 'altogether out of their sphere, and totally incapable of ever being brought into the most distant comparison with either of them'.[25] This latter point had already been made by John Wilson in a review of Hunt's Literary Pocket-Book (1819-20) published the previous December (his comments echoing those made regarding Procter's superiority to these 'two dead Eternities [Keats and Hunt]' in the preceding paragraph):[26]

> It would greatly amuse us, to meet in company together, Johnny Keates and Percy Bysshe Shelly,—and as they are both friends of Mr Leigh Hunt, we do not despair of witnessing the conjunction of these planets on Hampstead Hill, when we visit London in spring. A bird of paradise and a Friezland fowl would not look more absurdly, on the same perch.[27]

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[24] 'Prometheus Unbound', Blackwood's (Sept. 1820), 686-7.

[25] Ibid. and 'Cockney School I' (Oct. 1817), 40-1.

[26] As was noted in Chapter IV, Procter was another 'man of...genius' whom the 'Cockney School' were said to be 'desirious' of claiming (see Blackwood's review of his Dramatic Scenes published Jun. 1819, 310-11).

[27] 'Literary Pocket-Book', 240.

For William Maginn, however, there was little, if any, difference between Shelley and his 'fellow-Cockneys' in the 'New School'.[28] Indeed, his 'Remarks' may be seen as a (belated) response to the 'Young Poets' notice of 1816; reflecting upon his summary of the 'present story', Maginn's readers may well have recalled that Keats was not the only one who had 'had it upon...authority...that he might become a light to their [the Cockneys'] region at a future time'.[29] The canonizer', Maginn declared, 'is worthy of the saint[,]...for we could prove, from the present Elegy, that it is possible to write two sentences of pure nonsense out of every three'.[30] That he had produced 'gratuitous' nonsense, even 'more unintelligible' than that of his 'prototype', Hunt, was, of course, the main criticism made of Keats in the Quarterly Review.[31] Moreover, it was this that had given rise to suggestions that he was 'a *Della Crusca*' poet.[32] Lockhart had earlier conceded that Shelley 'might not be inclined to place himself so high above these men [Keats and Hunt]' as he had done.[33] The poet's letter to Peacock of 21 March 1821 suggests that he would, however, have objected to being ranked among what he termed 'the Bavii and Mævii of the day'.[34] This is precisely what Maginn set out to do, prefacing his 'remarks' on Adonais with an account of the

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[28] As 'O'Doherty', Maginn also engaged in subsequent attacks upon Procter who - as was seen in Chapter IV - was to suffer a similar fall from favour by the spring of 1822.

[29] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696-7. Hunt's 'Young Poets' notice published in the Examiner for 1 Dec. 1816, 761-2.

[30] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 697, 698.

[31] Croker's review of Endymion (Apr. 1818, published Sept. 1818) quoted from Keats: The Critical Heritage, 111.

[32] Quoting the notice on Lamia in the Monthly Review (Jul. 1820), 305, Reiman, C, II, 705. Maginn agreed, declaring the production of such 'unintelligible stuff' to be 'The art of the modern *Della Cruscan* ', 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 697.

[33] 'Prometheus Unbound', 687.

[34] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 248-9.

satires to which Shelley alluded:

> Between thirty and forty years ago, the *Della Crusca* school was in great force. It poured out monthly, weekly, and daily, the whole fulness of its raptures and sorrows in verse, worthy of any "person of quality". It revelled in moonlight, and sighed with evening gales, lamented over plucked roses, and bid melodious farewells to the "last butterfly of the season"...The reign of "sympathy" was come again—poetry, innocent poetry, had at length found out its true language. Milton and Dryden and Pope and the whole ancestry of the English Muse, had strayed far from nature. They were a formal and stiff-skirted generation, and their fame was past and forever. The trumpet of the morning paper, in which those "inventions rich" were first promulgated, found an echo in the more obscure fabrications of the day, and milliners' maids and city apprentices pined over the mutual melancholies of *Arley* and *Matilda.* At length, the obtrusiveness of this tuneful nonsense grew insupportable; a man of vigorous judgement shook off his indolence, and commenced the long series of his services to British literature by sweeping away, at a brush of his pen, the whole light-winged, humming, and loving population.[35]

The passage concerning the (supposed) revival of 'nature' brings to mind Hunt's presentation of the 'new school' in the notice of 1816.[36] Then, 'Z' had claimed 'the honour of christening it...THE COCKNEY SCHOOL'. Now, Maginn proposed a new 'designation' by which it might 'henceforth' be known:[37]

> The *Della Crusca* school has visited us again, but with some slight change of localities. Its verses now transpire at one time from the retreats

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[35] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

[36] See the opening paragraph of 'Young Poets', 761.

[37] Quoting 'Cockney School I' (Oct. 1817), 38.

> of Cockney dalliance in the London suburbs; sometimes they visit us by fragments from Venice, and sometimes invade us by wainloads from Pisa. In point of subject and execution, there is but slight difference; both schools are 'smitten with nature, and nature's love', run riot in the intrigues of anemonies, daisies, and buttercups, and rave to the 'rivulets *proud*, and the deep *blushing* stars'.[38]

As his readers would no doubt have been aware, the 'localities' mentioned here had, at one time or another, been inhabited by Hunt, Byron and Shelley respectively. This provides the key to his statement that Adonais had been written at the request of 'the *Pisan* triumvirate' (word of the proposed 'periodical work' having by now begun to circulate).[39] In 'advert[ing] to the *Della Crusca*' Maginn not only taunted the friends of Keats with praise of Gifford's 'service to British Literature', he also sent a clear signal regarding the 'fate' of the new venture.[40] As we shall see, undermining the 'triumvirate' was to be the focus of much of the subsequent comment on the Liberal published in Blackwood's, which, in the months prior to the journal's appearance, largely 'had the field to itself'.[41]

The Magazine's first direct reference to the Liberal came in a 'Letter from London', dated 10 February 1822, anticipating the first number by some eight months. This took the form of a warning to Blackwood's and 'the other *dissenters*' (among

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[38] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

[39] Ibid. 696, 697. William H. Marshall highlights two notices published the following month (Jan. 1822) in which Shelley and Hunt were identified as Byron's 'colleagues' at Pisa, Byron, Shelley, Hunt, and The Liberal (Philadelphia, 1960), 45&n. Writing to Shelley on 21 Sept. 1821 Hunt had himself declared: 'We shall divide the world between us like the Triumvirate', Correspondence, I, 172.

[40] 'One generation swept away, another succeeds to its glories and its fate', Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696, 697,

[41] Marshall, 45-6.

them, Southey, a leading contributor to the Quarterly Review) regarding their treatment of Byron, who, it was said, would 'soon have it in his power to make fierce reprisals' on them. The explanation that follows recalls the passage highlighted by Peacock in Shelley's letter to him of 25 February 1819:

> You have perhaps heard of the Journal which is to be written by him [Byron] at Pisa, and sent over here for publication, in order that the balance of critical power may be restored, which has preponderated lately too much on the Tory side...I am glad to behold him arming himself, and I hope we will see a 'good fight'. Southey does not go the right way to work with him. I have better confidence in your judgement and mettle.[42]

The names of Byron's 'two allies' in this 'great undertaking' had already been announced elsewhere.[43] 'Johnes', as the author of the 'Letter' signed himself, gave, in addition, a report of the Hunts' departure (14 November 1821) from the so-called 'retreats of Cockney dalliance'. He also commented - with some accuracy - on the preparations made for their reception at the Casa Lanfranchi:[44]

> Mr Leigh Hunt...has abandoned his suburban villa, (No. 13, Lisson Grove North,) to brave, with his wife and 'Little Johnnys', a perilous voyage of the un-cockney ocean. The sphere of this poet's experience will now be nobly enlarged. No one must twist him any more about 'poplar rows' and 'back gardens'...His lordship of Newstead has sent Leigh a subsidy, and has likewise prepared, in a costly way, the lower part of his Pisan residence

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[42] 'John Johnes', 'Letter from London', Blackwood's (Feb. 1822), 237.

[43] 'Letter from London', 237. See Marshall for notices in the European Magazine (Jan. 1822) and Windsor and Eton Express (12 Jan. 1822), 44-5.

[44] 'Letter from London', 237.

> for the reception of his London ally.[45]

Those waiting at Pisa had, until recently, believed the Hunts' arrival to have been imminent. On 11 December 1821 Shelley had informed Claire Clairmont that they were expected 'every day'. This was repeated in a letter to Peacock, written a month later, in which he also noted that Hunt would be 'agreeably surprised to find a commodious lodging prepared for him after the fatigues and dangers of his passage'.[46] The '*dissenters*' would, no doubt, have been pleased had they known that a 'chaos of perplexities' had attended the arrival, on 24 January, of the news that he had been forced to temporarily abandon his journey at Dartmouth.[47]

Having commented on the forthcoming Journal, the author of the 'Letter from London' turned his attention to Shelley's Epipsychidion (1821). Written during the early part of 1821, and published anonymously that summer, the poem pre-dated both Adonais and Byron's proposal. Nevertheless, 'Johnes' was in 'no doubt' that this too had 'come...from the Holy Pisan Alliance':

> This little pamphlet is a threefold curiosity, on account of the impenetrable mysticism of its greater portion, the delicious beauty of the rest, and the object of the whole, which I take to be an endeavour to set aside the divine prohibition, that a man may not marry his own sister.[48]

Though ostensibly an attack on Shelley, the comment made upon this passage by Blackwood's 'Christopher North' (John Wilson) was evidently intended to test that

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[45] 'Letter from London', 237.

[46] The letter to Peacock 'probably' dated 11 Jan. 1822, Complete Works of Shelley, X, 338, 342.

[47] See Shelley's letters to Horace Smith and Hunt, both dated 25 Jan. 1822, Complete Works, X, 347, 349.

[48] 'Letter from London', 237-8.

'Alliance'. Heeding the warning issued earlier in the 'Letter', 'North' hastened to dispel any suspicion that Epipsychidion was to be attributed to Byron. 'There is nobody capable of wasting such poetry on such a theme', he asserted, 'except only the unfortunate Mr Shelly [*sic*]'. What follows recalls both the conclusion to Lockhart's review of Prometheus Unbound and Maginn's representation of the poet in his 'Remarks on...Adonais':

> To this gentleman's genius we have always done justice; and hitherto we have really avoided—what the Quarterly...has more recently had the audacity *to say* it has avoided—the smallest allusion to his private character. But Percy Bysshe Shelly [*sic*] has now published a long series of poems, the only object of which seems to be the promotion of ATHEISM and INCEST; and we can no longer hesitate to avow our belief, that he is as worthy of co-operating with the King of Cockaigne [i.e. Hunt, as he is unworthy of co-operating with Lord Byron. Shelly is a man of genius, but he has no sort of sense or judgement. He is merely 'an inspired idiot!'. Leigh Hunt is a man of talents, but vanity and vulgarity neutralize all his efforts to pollute the public mind. Lord Byron we regard as not only a man of lofty genius, but of great shrewdness and knowledge of the world. What can HE seriously hope from associating his name with such people as these?[49]

To Blackwood's 'Editor', the association of Byron, Shelley and Hunt now seemed as absurd as the prospect of a meeting between Shelley and Keats on Hampstead Hill had done. Discussing 'this holy alliance of Pisa' with 'O'Doherty' (Maginn) in the first of the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' series, published the following month, he declared:

> Imagine Shelly, with his spavin, and Hunt, with his staingalt, going in the same harness with such a caperer as Byron, three a-breast! He'll

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[49] 'Letter from London', 237-8&n.

> knock the wind out of them both the first canter![50]

In the words of 'R.S.', writing on the first and second numbers of the Liberal' a year later, such images were 'meant as a friendly whisper' in the 'private ear' of Byron who, it was claimed, '[was] known to be a reader and admirer of [the] Magazine'.[51] The poet was (by his own admission) to hear many such 'whispers' from 'all [his] friends of all parties'.[52] Among them was Thomas Moore, whom Byron would, nevertheless, urge to 'become one of the *properrioters*' of the journal, having made an initial request for 'any thing in prose or verse' soon after Hunt's long-awaited arrival at Pisa in July 1822.[53] His activities 'at the time that Lord Byron thought proper to join with...Hunt and Shelley' were described by (future contributor) Hazlitt in an essay 'On Jealously and Spleen of Party' (1826), subsequently cited in Hunt's Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries (1828):

> Mr. Moore darted backwards and forwards from Cold-Bath-Fields Prison to the Examiner office, from Mr. Longmans to Mr. Murray's shop in a state of ridiculous trepidation, to see what was to be done to prevent this degradation of the aristocracy of letters, this indecent encroachment of plebian pretensions, this undue extension of patronage and compromise of privilege.[54]

One particular comment of Moore's upon which both Hazlitt and Hunt remarked was 'that the Liberal had a taint in it'. Presumably, they referred to the following passage

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[50] 'Noctes Ambrosianæ. No. I', Blackwood's (Mar. 1822), 363.

[51] See 'The Candid. No. II', Blackwood's (Mar. 1823), 265-6. 'The Candid. No. I' appeared Jan. 1823, 108-24.

[52] Byron's term, used in a letter to Procter dated 5 Mar. 1823, BLJ, X, 116-7,

[53] See the letters to Moore dated 12 July and 27 Aug. 1822, Ibid. IX, 182-3, 197.

[54] Hazlitt's Plain Speaker essay quoted from the footnote to Hunt's Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries, 48, 54-5.

from a letter sent to Byron in February 1823:

> I am most anxious to know that you mean to emerge out of the Liberal...I would *not* mix myself up in this way with others. I would *not* become a partner is this sort of miscellaneous '*pot au feu*', where the bad flavour of one ingredient is sure to taint all the rest.[55]

The 'Editor' of Blackwood's had, in fact, made a similar observation in the earlier discussion with 'O'Doherty'. Responding to the latter's report that the 'holy alliance of Pisa' was to publish in London - 'the Editor here' (John Hunt) being 'one of that faction' - he declared: 'of course; but I doubt they will be able to sell many. Byron is a prince; but these dabbling doggrelers destroy every dish they dip in'.[56] In the case of Hunt, this would no doubt be achieved by the 'cursed number of sonnets' that he was expected to write after having been 'drive[n]...clean out of his wits' by the 'pictures and statues' of Italy.[57]

The danger to Hunt of an encounter with 'Niobe and her Nine daughters' having been noted in the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ', the probable effects of his arrival at Pisa on Byron were considered in a 'Letter from Paddy', published in Blackwood's the following month. This was preceded by a verse 'Critique on Lord Byron' which concluded with 'a short word of counsel' regarding the 'intended triple alliance':[58]

> 'Twould be wrong, noble Bard, Oh! permit me to tell ye,

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[55] The Letters of Thomas Moore, II, 514.

[56] 'Noctes Ambrosianæ No. I', 363. John Hunt's involvement in the editing of the 'Pisan Journal' had already been noted in the 'London Chit-Chat', 331.

[57] 'Noctes Ambrosianæ No. I', 364.

[58] This description of the associates in the Liberal echoes Walpole's contemptuous reference to the '*Quadruple Alliance*' of Merry, Greatheed, Parsons and Mrs Piozzi in his letter to Mann of 28 March 1786, Yale Edition, XXV, 635.

> To establish a league with Leigh Hunt and Byshe [*sic*] Shelley;
> Already your readers have swallow'd too much,
> Like Amoboyna's swollen victims when drench'd by the Dutch.
> The world cries, in chorus, 'tis certainly time
> To close up your flood-gates of blank verse and rhyme.
> Hold! Hold!—By the public thus sated and cramm'd,
> Lest your lays, like yourself, stand a chance to be d—d![59]

Commenting on Byron's Cain (1821) in a footnote to the earlier 'Letter from London', 'Christopher North' had asserted that, whilst it was 'in some parts a reprehensible performance', there existed, nevertheless, 'a gulf profound' between this and the productions of Shelley.[60] The author of the current 'Letter' (who, given the Dublin address, may well have been Maginn) evidently thought otherwise.[61] Anticipating his own 'very sublime and elegant essay...concerning "The Originality of Modern Character"', he defined Byron's particular 'genius' as:

> a sappy, generous twig - which, grafted upon one crab-stock or another, is sure to produce rare and well-flavoured fruit; but which, if stuck in the earth to root of itself, would never bring forth aught worthy of being shaken from the tree.[62]

'Since Shelley has been with him, he has written Cain', he observed, adding:

> And now Leigh Hunt is about to join him, I'll lay a guinea to an apple-

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59 'Palæmon', 'Critique on Lord Byron', Blackwood's (Apr. 1822), 460.

60 'Letter from London', Blackwood's (Feb. 1822), 237n.

61 The DNB states that 'most contributions with internal evidence of an Hibernian origin may be ascribed to [Maginn]', XXXV (1893), 320.

62 'Letter from Paddy', 461.

paring, that his Lordship sets up an Examiner, or writes a Cockney poem, commencing,

> Lack-a-day! but I've grown wiser,
> Since Mister Hunt has come to Pisa*r*.[63]

In the third of the 'Cockney School' essays, published in July 1818, a 'sentence of excommunication from the poets of England' had been 'pronounced' upon this same 'Mister Hunt'.[64] Having 'establish[ed] a league with him', Byron's 'account with the muses' was also deemed to have been 'closed, at least in English'. 'For as to what his Lordship will write hereafter', 'Paddy' argued, 'it is all prunella...he has become Italian in body and soul, and seems to have been drained of every drop of British blood, that was wont to form the eloquent tide of his poetry'.[65] The 'Critique on Lord Byron' had already noted that 'the Public' was 'at length...beginning to tire on' his work.[66] The implications of this for the 'intended triple alliance' would be made clear in a subsequent notice upon the Edinburgh Review's criticism of Cain:

> Shelley will henceforth rave only to the moon. Hunt will sonneteer to himself, and 'urge tear on tear', in memory of Hampstead butter and Chelsea buns; and Byron, sick of his companions, and ashamed of his career, will at length ask his dæmon, how it is that he has cast himself out of all the advantages that life lavished on him? Why he is an Englishman without a country—a peer without a seat in Parliament—and, most momentous of all, a Christian without a

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[63] 'Letter from Paddy', 463. Returning to this subject a year later, 'Paddy' declared: 'Only think, what must Byron be in twelve months hence, when Leigh has already won him to gloat over a cocklesshell with all the delight of a cit on Margate shore', 'News from Paddy', Blackwood's (Apr. 1823), 398.

[64] Ibid. (Jul. 1818), 454.

[65] 'Letter from Paddy', 465 and 'Critique on Lord Byron', 460.

[66] Ibid. 456.

> religion? He has lived long enough to know, that to live as he has done is to stuff himself with the husks and swinish refuse of life. Is an English nobleman to have no correspondent but his bookseller? No friends but a vulgar group, already shaken out of English society? No objects but the paltry praises of temporizing reviews? And no studies but the shame and scorn of honourable literature?[67]

This notice, published in June, represented the last of the 'light, open-hearted slaps' dealt to 'that Paltry Periodical of Pisa' by the Blackwood's critics until two months after its appearance.[68] In the meantime, word reached Italy of another 'publication about Byron and the Pisa Circle', one which threatened to increase that 'chaos of perplexities' to which Shelley had alluded when writing to Horace Smith on 25 January.[69]

In a letter to Hunt of 24 June 1822, Shelley noted that Byron was said to be 'in a state of supernatural fear about some lying memoirs...of him' (a report which had presumably come from Edward Trelawny).[70] He referred to the recent Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lord Byron with Anecdotes of some of his Contemporaries, published anonymously, yet known to be the work of John Watkins. As may be seen from the following extract, its portrayal of the poet had much in common with that of the 'Anglo-Italian Lord' in Blackwood's 'Letter from Paddy'.[71] Arriving at the point of Byron's residence in Italy, where he was known to be associated with Shelley, even 'after witnessing the atrocity' which the latter had committed during a visit to 'the

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[67] 'Cambridge Pamphlets—Irish Ball &c. &c. &c.', Blackwood's (Jun. 1822), 740-1.

[68] This is how 'Christopher North' described the Magazine's previous comments on the Liberal in his introduction to 'The Candid No. I' (Jan. 1823), 108.

[69] Reference to the 'publication' taken from Shelley's letter to Edward Trelawny of 18 Jun. 1822, Complete Works, X, 347, 406.

[70] Ibid. X, 408.

[71] 'Letter from Paddy', 461.

priory of St Bernard at Chamouny', Watkins observed:[72]

> What other changes the lapse of above two centuries may have produced in that country of blue lakes and perpetual sun-shine, it would be tedious to examine; but there is some reason to fear that they who go thither for the benefit of the climate, or the contemplation of scenery, neither bring away a substantial addition to their stock of knowledge, nor any valuable improvement in their morals. That a long residence in that land of soft enchantments has an injurious effect upon the mental faculties, seems remarkably exemplified in the case of Lord Byron; whose poetic genius, if it has not been altogether enfeebled by Italianized manners, has neither acquired new vigour, nor gained an access of lustre in what honest Ascham calls 'Circe's Court'.[73]

In his 'Remarks on...Adonais', Maginn had claimed that, whilst 'they were foolish and profligate', the 'defunct *Della Crusca*' had not - like their so-called 'imitators' - 'deliver[ed] themselves, with the steady devotedness of an insensate and black ambition, to the ruin of society'.[74] Watkins detected a similar 'ambition' in 'the case of Lord Byron', concluding the account of his decline with the observation that 'he seem[ed] to have formed the resolution of taking a downward course and of obtaining distinction by the degradation of his intellectual powers'.[75] Clearly drawing on the introduction to the Baviad, Maginn had referred to Gifford's having '[shaken] off his

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[72] Watkins referred to the addition to his signature of the 'blasphemous distich' and 'infamous epithet' of Atheist, Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lord Byron with Anecdotes of some of his Contemporaries (London, 1822), 268-9.

[73] Memoirs, 328. See similar comments, with reference to Byron, on the 'injurious' consequences of 'a journey to Italy' made by Haydon in Aug. 1819, Diary, II, 231-2.

[74] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

[75] Memoirs, 329.

indolence' to 'sweep...away' the Della Cruscans.[76] Watkins was to go a step further. Addressing the satirist in terms of 'admiration' and 'respect' similar to those previously used by Byron himself, he argued that, in ignoring Gifford's disapproval of Cain, Byron had forfeited any right to 'the forbearance hitherto manifested towards' him in the Quarterly Review:[77]

> It becomes incumbent upon you, Sir, to rouse from your torpidity, and, setting aside all private considerations, to make it evident that the same principle actuates you now as when, in the BAVIAD and the MÆVIAD, you put down the witlings and libellers of a former day. The objects against whom you directed those powerful weapons, were harmless ephemera, or at the most but troublesome insects, compared with the chartered Libertine who has gone forth defying heaven and earth. In your hands, Mr. Gifford, is placed the only effectual instrument than can bring this haughty spirit to a sense of shame and a course of propriety.[78]

As would become clear in the final chapter of the Memoirs, intervention was now all the more necessary, given 'the circumstance, too well accredited to be called in question, of his lordship's having established a literary circle at Pisa'. It seemed 'extraordinary' to Watkins that Byron 'should find it expedient to call to his assistance a set of writers for the purpose of compiling a literary journal'. However, he continued, 'it has a doubtful aspect, when we see the proprietor and editor of the most seditious paper in England pensioned and drawn to Italy that he may have the management of this work':

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[76] 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696. Gifford had written: 'I waited with a patience I can better account for, than excuse, for some one (abler than myself) to step forth', Baviad and Mæviad, xiv.

[77] Memoirs, xii. See Byron's letter to Gifford, dated 18 Jun. 1813, BLJ, III, 63-4.

[78] Ibid. ix-x.

> The scheme of collecting around him a constellation of talent for the purpose of propagating his principles, is a goodly proof of the regard which the noble Lord has for the human race, and of his respect for the institutions of his native land. It is true we can most gladly spare the worthies whom he has chosen to as his co-adjutors in this great concern; and if to the Shelleys, and the Hunts, who are to be the professors in this new academy of blasphemy, the noble president shall be pleased to add a score or two more of the same kind, England will be a gainer by their emigration...But though we are willing enough that Italy should enjoy the honour of fostering this sect of modern Pyrrhonists, we have neither a wish to see the new academy transplanted from the Arno to the Thames, nor any desire to be illuminated by the works which they may produce.[79]

'There can be no doubt that the love of fame is the ruling notice of his lordship', Watkins concluded, 'but the mode in which he pursues his object, is more likely to injure than to advance his reputation'.[80] Writing to John Gisborne on 18 June 1822, Shelley had predicted that Byron would be 'half mad to hear of these Memoirs'.[81] There is no obvious reference to them in Byron's own correspondence until 8 August, when he sought Moore's opinion as to whether or not he should 'do any thing about [the] book'.[82] Nevertheless, Shelley feared that it would 'injure Hunt's prospects in the establishment of the Journal'. 'Lord Byron is so mentally capricious', he told Gisborne, 'that the least impulse drives him from his anchorage'.[83] As he would explain in a subsequent letter, to Horace Smith, he had never intended being anything other than 'a sort of link between' these 'two thunderbolts' until such time as they were

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[79] Memoirs, 408-15.

[80] Ibid. 408-15.

[81] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 402.

[82] BLJ, IX, 190-1.

[83] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 402.

able to 'know each other, and effectuate the arrangements'. Now, having come to regard Bryon as 'the nucleus of all that [was] hateful and tiresome in [society]', he could 'not consent to be even that'. Though he would not wish his 'doubts on the subject' to be known, Shelley feared what Blackwood's had already predicted, that the 'alliance' behind the Liberal would 'not succeed'.[84]

'Letters from Abroad' and 'other amenities'

Writing to the Shelleys on 21 September 1821, Hunt acknowledged his friend's reluctance to be anything more than a 'sleeping partner' in the new 'Triumvirate'. He agreed to Byron's proposal 'with the less scruple', however, as he had had 'a good deal of experience in periodical writing' and knew 'what the getting up of the *machine* require[d], as well as the soul of it'.[85] As we shall see, Hunt would have cause to rue his decision, finding 'the *machine* ' taken in an altogether different direction to that which he had expected. The 'soul of it' remained however, particularly in those pieces in which Hunt drew upon his experience of Italy, and it is primarily with these that the present section is concerned.

When communicating Byron's 'message' concerning the proposed 'periodical work', in his letter to Hunt of 26 August 1821, Shelley had expressed the belief that 'the profits of any scheme in which [he] and Byron engag[ed], must from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great'.[86] 'You and he [would], in different manners,...be equal', he argued, 'and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportions

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[84] Quoting the letter to Hunt of 26 Aug. 1821and that to Smith dated 29 June 1822. The comment regarding Byron taken from the earlier letter to Gisborne, Complete Works of Shelley, X, 318, 402, 410.

[85] Correspondence, I, 172.

[86] Complete Works of Shelley, X, 318.

equal stock of reputation and success'.[87] For Thomas Carlyle, who had similarly high expectations of a work in which Byron was 'said...to take a large share', however, it was the difference between the two that was the more telling.[88] Writing to Jane Welsh, soon after its publication, on 28 October 1822, he gave the following account of the first number, a work which would, he declared, 'hardly do':[89]

> Byron's Magazine or rather Hunt's 'the Liberal' is arrived in town; but they will not sell it—it is so full of Atheism and Radicalism and other noxious *isms*....I read it thro' and found two papers apparently by Byron, and full of talent as well as mischief. Hunt is the only serious man in it, since Shelley died: he has a wish to preach about politics and bishops and pleasure and paintings and nature, honest man; Byron wants only to write squibs against Southey and the like.[90]

The 'squibs' to which Carlyle refers were The Vision of Judgement and 'A Letter to the Editor of "My Grandmother's Review"', the former sent to Murray at the

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[87] Hunt agreed, declaring that they would 'divide the world between [them], like the Triumvirate'. See Correspondence, I, 172, and Complete Works of Shelley, X, 318.

[88] See the letter to Jane Welsh, dated [18 Oct. 1822], in which he predicted that it would be 'the cleverest performance extant in that case', The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle, 31 vols., eds. Charles Richard Sanders and Kenneth J. Fielding (Durham, North Carolina, 1970-2003), II, 177.

[89] Writing to his brother John on 9 Jan. 1823, Hunt imagined Hazlitt delivering the opposite verdict. As Gates points out, in doing so, he recalled Hazlitt's comment on The Story of Rimini in a letter of 15 Feb. 1816, which was itself 'a riff' on Francis Jeffrey's criticism of Wordworth's Excursion (Edinburgh Review, Nov. 1814), 131.

[90] In a subsequent letter to Alexander Galloway, dated 6 Nov. 1822, Carlyle described Byron's articles as 'exceedingly potent', those 'in Hunt's vein', being 'no better or worse than a common Examiner', Collected Letters, II, 190, 195.

beginning of October 1821, the latter 'written in great haste' some two years earlier.[91] Byron's principal contributions to the second and third numbers of the Liberal also dated from 1821.[92] His translation of the first canto of Pulci's Morgante Maggiore - published in the fourth - was begun early in 1820 (being, in part, a response to 'the new style of poetry' which had 'lately sprung up' with 'the ingenious Whistlecraft').[93] It was towards the end of that year that Byron had contemplated 'set[ting] up...a *newspaper*' with Moore.[94] This, according to Shelley, was the origin of the 'scheme' subsequently put to Hunt (though 'with some slight change of localities').[95] Writing to Moore on 25 December 1820 had Byron introduced the paper as 'a project' to be considered 'in case [they] both [got] back to London'.[96] What follows anticipates Carlyle's remarks upon the Liberal:

> There must always be in it a piece of poesy from one or other of us *two* , leaving room...for such dilettanti rhymers as may be deemed worthy of appearing in the same column...and also as much prose as we can compass. We will take an *office*—our names *not* announced, but suspected—and, by the blessing of Providence, give the age some new lights upon policy, poesy, biography, criticism, morality, theology, and all other *ism, ality*,

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91 For the 'Letter' - aimed at William Roberts of the British Review - see Byron to Hobhouse and Murray, 23 Aug. 1819, and, for The Vision, his letters to Moore, Douglas Kinnaid and Murray of 1 and 4 Oct. 1821, BLJ, VI, 213-5, VIII, 229-32.

92 Heaven and Earth, a Mystery was originally submitted to Murray on 14 Nov. 1821, The Blues, a Literary Eclogue, having been sent on 7 Aug., Ibid. VIII, 172, IX, 58-9.

93 It was 'half done' when he wrote to Murray on 7 Feb. Ibid. VII, 35. Byron's 'Advertisement' quoted from the Complete Poetical Works, IV, 247.

94 See Byron to Moore, 25 Dec. 1820, BLJ, VII, 253-5.

95 Quoting Maginn's 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

96 BLJ, VII, 253.

and *ology* whatsoever'.[97]

In closing, Byron stated that he would 'begin to lay in a small literary capital of composition for the occasion'.[98] The pieces subsequently published in the Liberal may not have formed part of any such 'capital'; indeed, Byron had evidently submitted them to Murray in the expectation that they be brought out at the first opportunity. Nevertheless, a remark made in a letter to the publisher of 7 August 1821 would suggest the poet was open to the idea of a suitable outlet for 'such things' at the time of Shelley's visit:[99]

> I send you a thing—which I scratched off lately—a mere buffoonery—to quiz "the Blues" in two literary eclogues.—If published it must be *anonymously* —but it is too short for a separate publication—and *you* have no miscellany that I know of—for the reception of such things.[100]

That Byron had 'never written anything' specifically 'for the Liberal' (other than two pieces which were eventually published separately) was something upon which Hunt would remark when writing to Elizabeth Kent on 7 April 1823. 'What he has

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[97] Similarly, when urging Moore to join the Liberal on 12 Jul. 1822, Byron wrote: 'Do send Hunt any thing in prose or verse of yours...any lyrical, *iri* cal, or what you please', BLJ, VII, 253-4, IX, 183.

[98] Ibid. VII, 254.

[99] Ibid. VIII, 172.

[100] A 'curious Miscellany' is how Byron described the Liberal when writing to John Hunt on 14 Apr. 1823, Ibid. X, 150-1. His comments appear to have contributed to a notice printed in the Examiner for 31 Aug. 1823 in which it was stated that the four numbers were 'now collected in two octavo Volumes, forming certainly one of the most curious and interesting Miscellanies ever published'. Examiner quoted from Marshall, 200.

contributed hitherto', he explained, 'is from manuscripts he had by him; and there is more for the 2 next numbers'.[101] Hunt's frustration at this was evident in a letter sent to Byron at the beginning of July. In it he complained of the 'equivocal & merely Murray-eschewed character' that the Liberal had taken. This, he believed, had contributed to the failure of 'a work, which might, & no doubt would, have flourished with the help of a reasonable patience & exertion'. In 'stat[ing his] case', Hunt reminded Byron both of his original invitation and of the reply in which he had thanked him 'for the honour, pleasure, and advantage [he] did [him]' in proposing that they 'publish [their] productions in common'.[102] It was in this letter, written at Plymouth on 27 January 1822, that Hunt had outlined his own ideas for the project, the emphasis being very much on its 'Pisan origin':

> Shelley has not told me what sort of writing is proposed, but I conclude something in a periodical shape; and if you would set up something of this kind with me, in which you would pour forth all your thoughts & what you have seen, you would delight the public with a new series of works in prose as well as poetry...Suppose, for instance, we made a monthly or two-monthly publication, entirely of Pisan origin, that is to say, written by ourselves and friends there; it might begin...with your account of a land journey to Italy, which I might follow in the next number with that of a sea-one, and then we might have essays, stories, poetry, poetical translation, especially from the Italian,—in short, any thing we chose to blurt out or be inspired with.[103]

This outline provided the basis for that part of the 'Preface' to the Liberal in which Hunt set out 'the object of [their] work', declaring it their intention 'to contribute

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[101] The poems which Hunt identifies as having been intended for the magazine were The Island and The Age of Bronze, both dating from 1823, Brewer, 127.

[102] Letter dated 'July [?4] 1823' in Gates, 139-40.

[103] Ibid. 113.

[their] liberalities in the shape of Poetry, Essays, Tales, Translations, and other amenities,...Italian Literature, in particular', being 'a favourite subject'. As in the letter, he raised the possibility of their being joined by 'more than one foreign correspondent', adding, 'in the meantime, we must do our best by ourselves; and the reader may be assured he shall have all that is in us...for "We love to pour out all ourselves as plain/As downright SHIPPEN or as old MONTAIGNE"'.[104]

Published in the third number of the Liberal (*c.* 26 April 1823), Hunt's own Book of Beginnings encompassed many of the 'amenities' mentioned in the Preface. A series of 'light poetic spinnings' on the subject of 'exordiums', interwoven with extracts and translations from the Italian, the poem also encapsulated the 'crowd of thoughts' which had 'face[d him] on entering the Mediterranean' the previous summer.[105] It was upon this coast - 'rich in ancient and modern interest' - that 'the ground of Italian romance' commenced. It was here too that he began to realise his early 'book-wonders'.[106] Reminded of the various descriptions of the sea found in the work of his poetic predecessors, Hunt reflected that 'the water at [his] feet' was:[107]

> the same water that bathes the shores of Europe, of Africa, and of Asia,—of Italy and Greece, and the Holy Land, and the lands of chivalry and romance, and pastoral Sicily, and the Pyramids, and old Crete, and the Arabian city of Al Cairo, glittering in the magic lustre of the Thousand and One Nights.[108]

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[104] Liberal I, No. 1, vii.

[105] Quoting: Book of Beginnings, 97, and ALH, II, 286-7.

[106] Ibid. II, 281, 294, 301.

[107] Many of those to whose writings Hunt referred (including: Ariosto, Dryden, Hesiod, Homer, Horace, Ovid, Spenser and Virgil) also feature in the Book of Beginnings. See ALH, II, 260-5, 277, 282.

[108] Ibid. II, 286.

Among 'the books with which [he] chiefly amused [him]self in the Mediterranean' was Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, '[its] heroes having to do with the coasts of France and Africa'.[109] Indeed, Hunt viewed the shores from which Angelica and Medoro had 'taken ship for...Cathay' with 'a human interest'. Fancying that 'the keel of [their] vessel' crossed 'a real line, over which knights and lovers had passed', he remembered that he 'had a grudge of [his] own against Angelica', originating in his boyhood visits to Newman Street and the screens which had inspired his admiration of the Italian poet.[110] Ariosto was among those to whose 'brilliant sovereignties' the Liberal paid tribute.[111] As such, he may be regarded as one of the congenial 'spirits' whom Hunt invoked in the Preface, following an example set by the poet himself 'at the end of his great work [Orlando Furioso]'.[112] There - as Hunt had observed in one of his essays for the Indicator - the Italian 'introduced a host of his friends...coming down to the shores of poetry to welcome him home after his voyage'.[113] In another essay, Hunt referred to Ariosto as having a mind which 'could fly out of its nest over all nature'.[114] This brings to mind the following passage from the Book of Beginnings in which he described a poetical voyage of his own; it is also here (particularly, in the latter stanzas) that we hear echoes of the account of his recent crossing:

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[109] The same was true of Berni, whom he also read, along with Cervantes' Don Quixote and '[Pierre] Bayle's admirable *Essay on Comets* ', ALH, II, 291.

[110] Here, Hunt explains that he 'look[ed] upon [him]self as jilted by those fine eyes which the painter had given her in the English picture', Ibid. II, 294-5.

[111] In the first number, this took the form of Hunt's translation of the 'Episode of Cloridan, Medoro, and Angelica', Liberal, I, No. I, xii, 139-160.

[112] Preface, viii.

[113] 'On Commendatory Verses' quoted from The Indicator and the Companion, II, 115.

[114] 'Autumnal Commencement of Fires—Mantle-Pieces—Apartments for Study', quoted from The Indicator and the Companion, I, 7.

So when my turn comes to repose, I read
My magic books, and then with a bird's eye
Dart me far off, as he does to his bed,
Now to some piping vale of Arcady,
Now to some mountain-top, which I've heard said,
Holds the most ghastly breath in Tartary;
And then I'm cradled 'twixt my Appenines,
Spying the blue sky through the yellow vines.

And then I'm all with Ovid and his changes,
Or all with Spenser and his woods, or all
With Ariosto and his endless ranges,
Riding his Hippograff, till I grow too small
For eye to see: then—lo! I'm by the Ganges,
Quick as that fatal wight, who gave a call
To Solomon to send him out o' the way
Of Death, and met him there that very day.

And then again I'm playing fast and loose
With girls, in isles that stud the Grecian sea:
And then I'm in old Greece, and Œdipus
Holding his blind eyes up, creeps quietly
By his dear daughter's side, whom I would chuse,
Were I a god, my worshipp'd wife to be:
And then I'm in the valley, "wonder deep",
Where the cold waters lull old Sleep to sleep.

And then I'm all for Araby, my first love;
I'm Giafar, I'm a "genie", I'm a jar;

> I'm Sinbad in some very horrid grove,—
> Which is delicious: I'm the Calendar,
> Who with the lady was *one* hand and glove;
> I am the prince, who shot his bow so far,
> And found that cellar, with a stock divine
> Of lips to kiss, still redder than wine.[115]

The lines concerning his 'bird's-eye' invite a further comparison between this passage and Hunt's letter to the Shelleys of [23] August 1819. 'Whenever I write to you', it began, 'I seem to be transported to your presence':

> I dart out of the window like a bird, dash into a southwestern current of air, skim over the cool waters, hurry over the basking lands, rise like a lark over the mountains, fling like a swallow into the vallies, skim again, pant for breath —there's Leghorn—eccomi!—how d'ye do?[116]

This 'birdly propensity' was an essential characteristic of the Indicator, which Hunt announced in a subsequent letter to the Shelleys written just under a month later.[117] The letter anticipated the introductory essay published on 13 October in which he explained that the title derived from the name of 'a bird in the interior of Africa' which 'indicate[d] to honey-hunters where the nests of wild bees [were] to be found'.[118] In like manner, the 'object' of the new periodical was to 'point out [the] essence' of a variety of subjects which, though not necessarily 'temporary', would be presented 'as

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115 Book of Beginnings, 99-100.

116 Quoted from Gates, 99.

117 Letter dated 20 Sept. 1819, Correspondence, I, 149. The term 'birdly propensities' used by Hunt in 'The Indicator's Farewell' (21 Mar. 1821). Quoted from: Selected Writings, II, 326-7.

118 Ibid. II, 224.

much at the moment as if they were'.[119] 'To make others sensible of the merits of as many good things as possible' was also the 'great object' of the Liberal, in which (as we have seen) Hunt was to draw on his experience in the Indicator and other such ventures.[120] The Book of Beginnings is a clear example of this; so too are the 'Letters from Abroad' published in each of the four numbers. Here, Hunt put aside his conventional 'plural privileges' in order to 'move about' freely, giving 'the results of his impressions and encounters' with as much 'vivacity', as if he here were indeed 'unhampered with a body corporate'. This enabled him to retain that 'freshness of intercourse' previously achieved between 'the Indicator' and his readers, thereby fulfilling his 'Farewell' promise to 'renew his labours, if not in this shape, in others'.[121]

An important element of the plan put to Byron at the beginning of 1822, the idea for the 'Letters' had arisen the previous summer. Hunt had been forced to abandon the Indicator some months earlier, having, in his own words, 'almost died over the latter numbers'.[122] Writing to Shelley on 28 August, he now considered the impact upon the Examiner of an otherwise advantageous move to Italy. 'If the paper were going on swimmingly, the very reputation of doing so would', he felt, 'have too good an effect even upon [their] "liberal" readers' (by which he meant 'those who would not wait till [he] was well enough to amuse them again').[123] He 'could then write from Italy on general subjects, and even furnish a letter every week upon [his] journey there, the state of the country, &c.' - in other words, the 'thousand things' of

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[119] These were to include 'curious recollections of biography, short disquisitions on men and things' and 'the most interesting stories in history or fiction' with 'now and then a few original verses', Selected Writings, II, 224-5.

[120] Quoting the preface to Hunt's translation of 'Ariosto's Episode of Cloridan, Medoro, and Angelica', Liberal, I, No. 1, 141.

[121] Quoting 'Letter I', 97, 'The Indicator. No. I', and 'The Indicator's Farewell', Selected Writings, 225, 326.

[122] Quoting Hunt to the Shelleys, 10 Jul. 1821, Correspondence, I, 163,

[123] Ibid. I, 168.

which he had himself hoped to hear from the Shelleys:

> ...of Italy, of the Alps, of Milano la Grande, Firenze la Bella, and Napoli la Gentile,—of the ladies, the country, the books, the operas, and of Raphael and Julio Romano...how you live,—how you spend your days...[124]

As it turned out, the first of Hunt's 'Letters from Abroad' dealt, not with his journey, but with his impressions of Pisa. This, of course, was a fitting introduction to a work that was to be 'entirely of Pisan origin'. Indeed, 'render[ed]...interesting,...by its being left to a comparitive solitude', that 'tranquil' and 'stately' city was itself an ideal seat from which those 'professors of the Liberal schools' could 'do [their] work quietly'.[125] 'It looks', Hunt observed, 'like the residence of a university: many parts of it seem made up of colleges; and we feel as if we should "walk gowned"'. So it was, the university in question setting a fine example in the 'contribution of liberalities'. Commending the provision of 'affordable private tuition' and 'free lectures', Hunt noted that he had himself 'had the pleasure of interchanging some English and Italian reading' with the 'elegant scholar', Abate Giuliani. His children, meanwhile, had found 'a very kind and attentive master' in a 'young man of the name of Giannetti' (with whom he would resume the practice of 'interchang[ing] languages' when they met at Florence some two years later).[126] They followed in illustrious footsteps, for though Pisa then disputed with Florence 'the birth of Galileo' he had certainly 'studied

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[124] See the letter to Shelley dated 24 Apr. 1818 (though 'really written' on 21 Apr.), Correspondence, I, 116-9.

[125] See the Preface and 'Letter I', Liberal, I, No.1, vii, 99, 120. The term 'professors of the Liberal schools' used by 'R.S.' in 'The Candid. No.I', Blackwood's (Jan. 1823), 10.

[126] Quoting: Preface, vii, and 'Letter I', 98&n. For the later meeting, see Hunt to Elizabeth Kent, 2 Jun. 1824, Correspondence, I, 221.

and taught' in the city. 'Here his mind was born', Hunt explained, 'and another great impulse given to the progress of philosophy and Liberal Opinion'.[127] Galileo had not featured in the Preface. However, this tribute to him in the first of the 'Letters from Abroad reveals him to be one of the unnamed 'all' who had

> thrown light and life upon man, instead of darkness and death;...made him a thing of hope and freedom, instead of despair and slavery; a being progressive, instead of a creeping creature retrograde.[128]

These were the 'Spirits' whom Hunt called to assist in 'put[ting] life into [their] work'. 'If we have no pretensions to your genius', he added, 'we at least claim the merit of loving and admiring it, and of longing to further its example'.[129]

Another 'spirit' who may be said to have accompanied Hunt, certainly in his movement about Pisa, was that of Joseph Forsyth, author of the Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters (1813). Writing to Peacock from Rome on 23 March 1819, Shelley had recommended Forsyth as being 'worth reading'.[130] It is perhaps appropriate then that he should have been Hunt's guide to the city which he had first walked through 'arm-in-arm' with his friend. Hunt had recourse to the Remarks throughout his description of the Leaning Tower and its 'illustrious' companions (the Baptistry, cathedral and Campo Santo). Whilst he acknowledged his observations to be of 'much shrewdness and pith', however, he found in Forsyth 'a want of ear, and an affectation of ultra good sense' which 'rendered him in some respects extremely

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127 'Letter I', 120.

128 Preface, viii.

129 Ibid,

130 Or so he judged from the 'chapter or two' that he had then seen. The letter also refers to Hobhouse and Eustace whom he had previously advised Peacock to consult if he wanted 'to know nothing about Italy' (9 Nov. 1818), Complete Works of Shelley, IX, 347, X, 43-4.

unfit for a critic on Italy'.[131] This, perhaps, was a view shared by the author of the 'anticipative' notice published in the Examiner who had this to say of the first of the 'Letters' (the image of Hunt in the 'shape' of 'critic of Italy' again bearing more than a passing resemblance to Hunt in the 'shape' of 'Indicator'):

> It is a description of that very ancient city, PISA, as it now is;"—not the very dry detail of a mere antiquary or lover of classicality and virtù, but an attempt to execute an interesting picture of an interesting place, with the felicity which unites intensity of feeling with that refinement of perception which can multiply associations *ad infinitum*, and cull novelty of flavour and fragrance from the most beaten path.[132]

As was noted in Chapter III, Forsyth's Remarks may well have been among the books which Hunt consulted when seeking information for the Story of Rimini. Writing to Elizabeth Kent, shortly after their arrival, on 8 July 1822 Hunt noted that he had had 'pleasure in realizing the description in [his poem]' upon stepping 'outside of the three gates of Pisa', each of which opened onto 'roads of trees *with vines hanging down from one to the other in festoons*'.[133] There was plenty to remind him of his poem and the great work from which it was taken within the city too, prompting him to inform the readers of the Liberal that there had just been published a new Comment on the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri which gave 'a complete account of the real history of Paulo and Francesca'.[134] His description of the 'great houses' meanwhile, seems almost to recall the papered 'bower' in which much of the Story of Rimini was written:

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[131] See 'Letter I', 103-7, and ALH, II, 30-7

[132] 'Q.', "The Liberal: Verse and Prose from the South. To be continued occasionally. No. I', Examiner (13 Oct. 1822), 648, 652.

[133] Correspondence, I, 188. See the description of Francesca's journey from Ravenna, Rimini, II, 32.

[134] 'Letter I', 111. The Comment was the work of John Taafe.

> The ground-floors...have iron bars at the windows, evidently for security in time of trouble. The look is at first very gloomy and prison-like, but you get used to it. The bars also are thin, round, and painted white, and the interstices large; and if the windows are towards a garden, and bordered with shrubs and ivy, as in the Casa Lanfranchi; the imagination makes a compromise with their prison-like appearance and persuades itself they are guards only in time of war, but trellises during a peace-establishment.[135]

It is possible that the bars behind which his imagination had been required to make a similar compromise were indeed in Hunt's mind when he wrote this, 'plunging' into his work (as he had then done) that he might 'try to forget' the immediate reality of losing Shelley so soon after their long-anticipated reunion. Looking back to the earlier period in his Autobiography, Hunt would, in fact, admit that he had then 'enjoyed...such happy moments with [his] friends,...that in the midst of the beautiful climate which [he] afterwards visited, [he] was sometimes in doubt whether [he] would not rather have been in jail than in Italy'.[136]

The need to suppress 'sensations' that it would no longer 'do to dwell upon' was also apparent in the second of the 'Letters', described as 'a mere superficial sketch of Genoa'.[137] Nevertheless, in spite (or, perhaps, because) of this, Hunt chose to 'resort to the journal' which he had kept both throughout his voyage and during the 'happy' weeks following his arrival in that city, assuring his readers that he had since

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[135] 'Letter I', 101-2. See the description of his prison quarters in ALH, II, 148-9.

[136] 'Letter I', 103, and ALH, II, 159.

[137] 'Letter II.—Genoa', Liberal, I, No.1, 274, 286. The need was now all the more pressing, perhaps, since it was written in the midst of a controversy surrounding another 'letter from abroad' in which Byron was said to speak 'in the most disparaging manner' of those 'connected with him in the Liberal'. See the response to reports that Murray was 'shew[ing] about a letter answering this description' in the Examiner (27 Oct. 1822), 679, and for the letter in question (dated 9 Oct. 1822), BLJ, X, 12-13.

lived 'in the neighbourhood' for some time and 'found nothing to alter'.[138] This of course, was in keeping with the professed aim of the series, 'first impressions' being 'not only liveliest, but liveliest in the order in which they occurred'.[139] It also enabled him to imbue his 'sketch' with something of that 'state of pure enjoyment' and 'high animal spirits' in which (according to Charles Brown) the 'most magical' letters were written.[140] Hunt's first sighting of Genoa had been from the sea. It was, therefore, upon this, its 'finest aspect', that the 'Letter' opened:

> Imagine a glorious amphitheatre of white houses, with mountains on each side and at the back. The base is composed of the city with its churches and shipping; the other houses are country seats, looking out, one above the other, up the hill. To the left are the Alps with their snowy tops: to the right, and for the back, are the Appennines.[141]

Like the 'lucid Mediterranean', which 'washed against [their] vessel' as it sailed up the gulf upon which she sat 'as if...in State', this 'queen-like' city 'truly...realize[d]' Hunt's expectations of Italy, 'poetical as they were'.[142] The 'aspect' presented by some of her subjects, on the other hand, had apparently 'startled' his (equally poetical) 'notions of the Italian countenance', formed on the 'fine southern heads' of the artist's canvass or sculptor's showroom.[143] Recalling the boat which had 'piloted' them into

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[138] 'Letter II', 270, 286. He and Byron were now living (separately) in the neighbouring village of Albaro, having left Pisa towards the end of September.

[139] Ibid. 270.

[140] Qutoing Brown's essay on 'Letter-Writing', Liberal, II, No. 4, 243.

[141] 'Letter II', 269.

[142] Ibid. and ALH, II, 304, III, 68.

[143] An idea of these 'notions' may be found in the sonnet 'To Thomas Stothard, R.A.' in which Hunt compared the artist's own 'breathing heads' to the 'pictured shapes' of the old 'southern masters fine', Foliage, cxxxv.

the harbour, Hunt observed that, whilst being 'very neat', it had contained 'as ugly a set of faces as could well have been brought together', those of its younger occupants little more than 'half-withered masks—hard, stony, and pale'.[144] That there were in fact '*two* Italies' was something upon which Shelley had remarked when writing from Naples some four years earlier:

> one composed of the green earth and transparent sea, and the mighty ruins of ancient time, and aërial mountains, and the warm and radiant atmosphere which is interfused through all things. The other consists of the Italians of the present day, their works and ways. The one is the most sublime and lovely contemplation that can by conceived by the imagination of man; the other is the most degraded, and disgusting, and odious.[145]

The impression given in Hunt's 'Letter' is that the 'degradation' apparent in the modern Genoese was largely a result of their 'works and ways' having taken 'a commercial rather than a tasteful' turn. This, he noted, had led Alfieri to 'rank...them with their mules' in his 'Satire on Commerce'. Having only a limited 'personal acquaintance', Hunt felt little 'warranted to speak' on 'the character of the nation' himself. However, he conceded, 'I may observe generally, that they seem to partake of the usual faults and capabilities of an active people brought up in the habits of money-getting'.[146]

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[144] 'Letter II', 270-3 and ALH, III, 68. Hunt's experience recalls Galt's account of West's arrival at Rome. Pausing to reflect upon the 'magnifcence of the Campagna', he sighted a peasant whose 'physiognomy...struck him as something more wild and ferocious than any thing about the Indians' and in whom 'he saw man in that second state of barbarity, in which his actions are instigated by wants that have often a vicious origin'. See Galt, I, 91-4.

[145] Letter (to Hunt) dated 22 Dec. 1818, Complete Works of Shelley, IX, 10.

[146] 'Letter II', 281, 286-7.

The results of Hunt's observation of these 'habits' - and their impact upon both the Italian character and the 'stranger, full of...[their] poets and romances' - were also in evidence in the third of the 'Letters', simply entitled 'Italy'. Here they were complemented by an extract from Alfieri's satire (his 'miscellaneous poetry' being but 'little known in England'), and a translation of a sonnet of his on Genoa. This had only just come to Hunt's attention. However, it served to illustrate that contrast which had struck him upon his arrival the previous summer:

> Proud city, that by the Ligurian sea
> Sittest as at a mirror, lofty and fair;
> And towering from thy curving banks in air,
> Scornest the mountains that attend on thee;
> Why, with such structures, to which Italy
> Has nothing else, though glorious, to compare,
> Hast thou not souls, with something like a share,
> Of look, heart, spirit, and ingenuity?
>
> Better to bury at once, ('twould cost thee less)
> Thy golden-sweating heaps, where cramp'd from light,
> They and their pinch'd fasts ply their old distress.
> Thy rotting wealth, unspent, like a thick blight,
> Clouds the close eyes of these:—dark hands oppress
> With superstition those:—and all is night.[147]

The 'constant talk' of 'money-getting' aside, Hunt was primarily concerned with another 'national talent' - that for music. This, too, seemed to 'lurk' wherever he went, Rossini, in particular, being 'talked of, written of, copied, sung, hummed, whistled, and demi-semi-quavered from morning to night'. This, he noted, was at

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147 'Letter III.—Italy', Liberal, II, No. 3, 53-4, 59-62, 64-5.

the expense of Mozart, whose 'name appear[ed] to be suppressed by agreement'.[148] The explanation lay not in the superiority of Rossini - whose music was 'for the most part, common water, brisk in its course, and bringing down only grains of gold' - but in the fact that Mozart was 'a *German*'.

> The Germans in Italy, the lorders over Italian freedom and Italian soil, trumpet his superiority over Italian composers; and however right they may be...with regard to modern ones, this is enough to make the Italians hate him. It mortifies them the more, because they know that he is an exception to the general dulness of their conquerors; and not even the nonchalence of his own conduct towards kings and composers could reconcile them to the misery of preferring *any thing* German to the least thing Italian.[149]

One 'Italian' who would not have shared in this particular national prejudice was Vincent Novello. Indeed it was he who had prompted these observations with his request for 'a very long letter' containing 'a world of things about Italian composers, singers, &c.' That Hunt found it necessary to resort more general subjects (many of which he had already touched upon), may be accounted for by his statement that 'for music' Novello would be better to 'look at home', both Pisa and Genoa being comparatively deficient in their 'pretensions...to music'.[150] However, the answer may also lie in a letter sent to Horace Smith just prior to the third number's appearance, in which he explained that the 'country ha[d] been such a melancholy one' since Shelley's death, that he had 'nothing pleasant to tell [him] of it'.[151]

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[148] 'Letter III', 48, 51, 54. This is also something upon which Hunt had touched in the previous letter when recalling his attendance at the opera, 'Letter II', 283.

[149] 'Letter III', 49-51.

[150] Ibid. 47. Marshall points out that his letter was in fact sent to Novello 'in early March', Byron, Shelley, Hunt and The Liberal, 170-1.

[151] Letter dated 9 Apr. 1823 Correspondence, I, 195.

Like that which preceded it, the fourth (and final) of the 'Letters from Abroad' was also published in the form of a personal correspondence, with Novello, again, among those addressed. He was one of three whom Hunt urged to come, 'arm-in-arm, joking and to joke', to 'see one who hunger[d] and thirst[ed] after his old friends'. 'Transporting them' to Albaro, in a manner reminiscent of both his letter to the Shelleys of [23] August 1819 and the 'Book of Beginnings', Hunt described how he would entertain them during their visit:

> During the evening and early morning, I will shew you about. The rest of the time we will eat, sleep, lounge, read and converse. It will be hard if we do not have some music. There are pictures by Raphael and Guido in the palaces. The fruits are fine; the colours of things exquisite; every object about you new.[152]

'You cannot help being pleased', he insisted, adding: 'I myself shall catch a new inspiration from your coming, and will at least warrant my being merry for as long a time as you stay'. It seems that the mere prospect was having an effect. Writing to Arthur Brooke on 9 April 1823 (this being the date of his letter to Smith), Hunt had remarked that, whilst it remained 'the land of sunshine', for him, Italy was now 'smitten with darkness'.[153] In spite of this, he found plenty of interest to 'a scholar and lover of the country' from which to extract the 'essence', his 'birds-eye' darting

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[152] 'Letter IV', Liberal, II, No. 4, 251-2. Similarly, when writing to the Shelleys on [25-27] July 1819, Hunt had stated that if he were in Italy he would 'walk about with Shelley wherever he pleased,...be merry or quiet, chat, read, or impudently play and sing [them] Italian airs all the evening', Correspondence, I, 133.

[153] Gates, 135. This echoes his comment in a letter Joseph Severn of 16 Dec. 1822 that Italy's 'brightest sunshine will always have a shade in the very core of it' (quoted from the typescript of David **Cheney's** editon of Liegh Hunt's letters at the library of the University of Toledo).

from 'the olive trees and cypresses', with their reminders of 'a hundred things, Greek, Latin, and Italian', to the smallest of the 'southern' insects', before finally coming to rest upon a 'specimen or two of the Genoese dialect'.[154] Of the insects, one in particular would, he argued, 'be almost worth coming in the South to look at, as if there were no other attraction'. This was the 'fire-fly', or, 'Lucciola'; a 'spiritual-looking little creature', which Shelley had apparently 'watch[ed]...for hours' at a time. 'I look at them' now, Hunt reflected, 'and wonder whether any of the particles he left upon earth help to animate their loving and lovely light'. The overall tone of the 'Letter' suggests that the Liberal may indeed have gone on to flourish, had Hunt received the assistance he craved in bearing a 'thousand' such 'recollections full of Shelley and all beautiful things'.[155] In the letter in which he himself raised this possibility, Hunt noted that Byron had 'said, in some very emphatic words, that [he] would supply the loss to [him] in [his] own person'. How far he had been required to 'modif[y]' the 'meaning [of] these words' in his 'own mind' may be judged from the introduction to the following section.[156]

'Bacchus in Tuscany'

In letters to Murray and Moore dated 25 December 1822 and 20 February 1823 respectively, Byron had insisted that he knew 'too little of Hampstead and his satellites' to have 'any community of feeling—thought—or opinion' with Hunt .[157] It is hardly surprising then that, following the end of the Liberal, Hunt should have looked upon himself as one stranded in 'a foreign country,...surrounded with

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154 Quoting: 'Letter IV', 252, 'The Book of Beginnings', 99, and 'The Indicator. No. 1', Selected Writings, II, 225.

155 'Letter IV', 256-8.

156 Letter dated [?4] Jul. 1823, Gates, 139.

157 BLJ, IX, 69, 105.

strangers'.[158] His thoughts now turned to Florence, where he was to enjoy both reminders of Hampstead and the company of some of the very 'satellites' to whom Byron had alluded. By the end of the year he had embarked upon a new attempt to 'transplant...Italian vines' into English soil and it is chiefly with this that the present section is concerned.[159]

Commenting on the first number of the Liberal in December 1822, Blackwood's John Wilson argued that 'a man who knew nothing of Italian literature, except Hoole's Tasso,... must be impudent indeed to think of Florence'.[160] This, however, is precisely what Hunt was doing, spurred on, no doubt, by his reading of the Florentine Observer, a 'late...publication[,]...descriptive of the old buildings and other circumstances of local interest', and the source of the story which had given rise to Wilson's remarks.[161] Writing to John Taafe (author of the Comment on Dante noticed in the first of the 'Letters from Abroad') earlier that month, Hunt indicated that he and his family thought 'of being [his] neighbors [*sic*] in Florence' before the end of the coming year, 'moving also occasionally, as [he did] to Pisa'.[162] This was repeated in a subsequent letter to Joseph Severn, the young artist who had accompanied Keats to Italy in 1820 (his 'unwearied attendance' upon the poet earning him a 'tribute' in the Preface to Shelley's Adonais).[163] The letter, dated 3 February 1823, anticipated that published in the fourth number of the Liberal in its suggestion that Severn join them. 'Why couldn't you settle there...for a while at least', Hunt asked, 'and let us paint-ize,

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158 Quoting Hunt to Byron, [?4] Jul. 1823, Gates, 140.

159 Quoting ALH, III, 122.

160 'On the Cockney School of Poetry. No. VII', Blackwood's (Dec. 1822), 780. Of course, reflection might have told him that this (in Maginn's words) the 'fitting soil' for a 'modern *Della Cruscan*'. See 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 697, 700.

161 'The Florentine Lovers', Liberal I. No.1, 51-80.

162 Letter to Taafe, dated 5 Dec. 1822, Brewer, 145.

163 Complete Poetical Works, 426.

and poet-ize, and music-ize to our heart's [*sic*] content, if alas!, our hearts can ever be contented'. Insisting that Severn 'think of Florence', Hunt vowed to 'ring it into [his] ears whenever [he wrote]'.[164] As it turned out, it was Severn who would do the 'ringing'. Writing to William Haslam from Rome on 1 June 1823, the artist announced that he was 'hastening on to Florence to see [his] dear friend [Charles] Brown', who had moved to Italy the previous August. Clearly experiencing that 'pain of actual banishment' which Brown would himself describe in an essay for the Liberal, he added that his would be 'the first English face for [his] longing sight since [he] left England'.[165] By the end of the month - and having enjoyed a 'delicious journey... through the most romantic scenes of wild Nature' - Severn was at Florence, delighting in 'all the coziness' of Brown's company, and reading 'the long looked-for "Liberals"' promised in the letter of 3 February.[166] A 'most powerful book' in its own right, this gave him particular 'pleasure' on 'account' of its being associated with Hunt. Writing to the latter soon after his arrival, Severn urged him to 'hasten [his] coming':

> You must see La Verna the awful Mountain of St Francis...I should be delighted to accompany your poetic soul to such a place—I'll talk to Brown about {it}—and when you come here—all the plans shall be ready—you will come here soon? I have set my heart upon [it].[167]

It was not long after this that Hunt wrote to Byron outlining the 'awkward state of

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[164] Correspondence, II, 196.

[165] See KC, I, 271, and Brown's 'Letter-Writing', 340.

[166] Quoting Severn to Hunt, 26 Jun. 1823, Gates, 136-7. In the earlier letter, Hunt had written: 'I expect *Liberals* everyday by a vessel, having none here; of course, I always intended copies of them for you', Correspondence, II, 196.

[167] Letter dated 26 Jun. 1823, Gates, 136-7. Writing to Hunt just under a year later (20 May 1824), Severn asked that he return him a copy of his description of 'La Verna' as he was 'about some scenery in picture of that kind', Ibid. 148.

disadvantage' into which he had been 'thrown' following the end of their collaboration. His primary objective in doing so was to 'avail himself of the spirit, though not...the letter', of an 'offer' which Byron had made him 'a short time back', that of 'replacing [him] where [he] came from'. Accepting the 'payment of [his] expenses', Hunt explained that it was his intention to go, '*not* to *England*', but 'to *Florence*', where he could do 'much better, situated as [he was], & with a wife in such an ill state of health'.[168] The matter having been settled, Byron left Genoa (sailing for Greece) on 16 July 1823, the Hunts following on 26 August.[169]

Hunt's optimism regarding the move would appear to have been well-founded. Much had changed since their arrival in Genoa, 'health, hope and Italy' before them.[170] Nevertheless, he 'hailed it as a good omen...that the two first words which caught [his] ears' upon entering Florence were 'flowers and women (*Fiori* and *Donne*)'. This, of course, presented an agreeable contrast to the former city, where they had 'heard nothing in the streets but the talk of money'.[171] There - as he had told Byron - he could 'do nothing'.[172] In Florence, on the other hand, there were 'more conveniences':

> more books, more fine arts, more illustrious memories, and a greater concourse of Englishmen; so that [they] might possess, as it were, Italy and England together'.[173]

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168 Letter dated [?4 Jun.] 1823, Gates, 140.

169 Date of the Hunt's depature taken from Gates, Ibid. 143.

170 Quoting 'Letter II', 269.

171 ALH, III, 100. In addition, see 'Letter III', 53-4.

172 Letter dated [?4]Jul. 1823, Gates, 140.

173 ALH, III, 99. This is borne out in the account of Florence given by the author of Blackwood's own 'Letters from Italy' (who may well have alluded to Hunt when he described a walk near Milan as having been 'Italian as a certain friends of ours could have wished'). See 'No. III' (Nov. 1822), 531, and 'No. V' (Mar. 1823), 276-9.

Similar omens attended the Hunts' first night in the city. This was spent at a hotel situated in 'a very public street' which resulted in their being kept awake by 'songs and guitars'. 'It was', Hunt recalled, 'one of our pleasantest experiences of the south: and, for a moment, we lived in the Italy of books'. Music and 'graceful memor[ies]' accompanied them to their next lodgings in the Via delle Belle Donne, a name which was, in itself, 'a sort of tune to pronounce'. From there they moved to the Piazza di Santa Croce, where (in a sign of things to come) they lived with 'a Greek...called Dionysius', a 'proper Bacchanalian' who was 'always drunk' and 'spoke faster' than Hunt had 'ever heard'. His house stood on a corner of the Piazza, close to the church containing the remains of 'Galileo, Michael Angelo, Boccaccio, Macchiavelli, Alfieri and others'.[174] Given his comments in the first of the 'Letters from Abroad', this proximity to Galileo was surely as pleasing to Hunt as the sight of his house, just 'twenty yards from [her] door', had been to Mrs Piozzi on her arrival in Florence some thirty-eight years earlier.[175] Indeed, he was not sure 'whether the most interesting sight' in the city was not that of 'one of...[the astronomer's] fingers' preserved 'under a glass case in the principal public library'.[176] The house (Villa Morandi) in which the Hunts were to spend the remainder of their time in Italy was equally well-appointed. This was located about 'two miles off', in the village of Maiano, Marianne's health and the need for 'economy' having necessitated a move outwith the city.[177] From 'the windows on one side', Hunt recalled, 'we saw the turret of [Boccaccio's] Villa Gherardi',

> A house belonging to the Macchiavelli was nearer, a little to the left;

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[174] ALH, III, 100-2.

[175] See Observations and Reflections, I, 271.

[176] See Ibid. III, 137-8, and 'Letter I', 120. This also drew comment from Hazlitt. See his Notes of a Journey through France and Italy, Howe, X, 211-2n.

[177] See Hunt's letter to his brother, John, dated 14 Oct. 1823 (the day of the move to Maiano), Brewer, 158-9.

> and farther to the left...was the...village of Settignano, where Michael Angelo was born...From our windows on the other side we saw, close to us, the Fiesole of antiquity and of Milton, the site of [Boccaccio's father's] house...still closer, the *Decameron's* Valley of the Ladies at out feet; and we looked over towards the quarter of Mugnone and of a house of Dante... Lastly, from the terrace in front, Florence lay clear and cathedralled before us, with the scene of Redi's *Bacchus* rising on the other side of it, and the Villa Arcetri, illustrious for Galileo.[178]

Of no lesser consequence was the nearby convent of San Baldassare. It was here that Brown lived, until his move into lodgings close to the Duomo made Hunt a 'city visitor', introducing him to Severn's friend, Seymour Kirkup, the Irish peer, Lord Dillon and Walter Savage Landor (the latter, representing another link in the 'chain of handshakes' connecting Hunt to the 'Della Cruscans').[179] Visitors to Maiano, meanwhile, were to include the Hunts' Pisan tutor, Gianetti (in Florence to study law), their nephew Marriott, and the recently-married Hazlitt, who was particularly appreciative of the Villa Morandi's setting, describing it in his Notes of a Journey through France and Italy (1826) as a view to 'enrich' the sight.[180]

It was shortly after settling at Maiano that Hunt began his translation of Francesco Redi's Il Bacco in Toscana (1685), a celebrated 'mock-heroic' extolling the virtues of an array of (predominantly Tuscan) wines. This was a poem that had also

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[178] ALH, III, 105-6.

[179] Ibid. III, 107-9, DNB VIII (2004), 14 and XXXI, 817. According to R. H. Super, Landor became acquainted with Berite Greatheed during the late-1790s when 'engaged in the political battles of his native borough' (Warwick). See Walter Savage Landor: A Biography (London, 1957), 38-9.

[180] In Howe, X, 211. The arrival of Gianetti is noted in a letter to Elizabeth Kent of 2 Jun. 1824, Correspondence, II, 221, that of Marriott and the Hazlitts in another, dated 12 Feb. 1825, Correspondence, I, 221, and Gates, 162-3.

inspired Robert Merry during his residence in Florence some thirty-eight years earlier (though his 'Dithyrambicks' to 'Bacchus', 'Diana' and 'Venus' were not among the pieces subsequently printed in the European and Gentleman's Magazines).[181] As his Autobiography confirms, Hunt had had the 'good fortune' to obtain a complete edition of the Bacco whilst in prison (1813-15), after discovering it in the catalogue of the Sion College Library, an 'encounter' which he likened in his Preface to that of 'meeting a pipe of choice wine among the effects of a clergyman':[182]

> I was in possession of Mr. Mathias's edition ; but here were the whole of the author's notes, learned and good natured as Selden over his cups; and besides, here was the author himself, with eyes like an antelope, in the full-flowing peruke of the age of Charles the Second'.[183]

There he had found 'solace' in 'copying out a selection of the notes, little thinking [he] should one day have the pleasure of translating the poem in its native country'.[184] An early indication that Hunt was considering such a project is found in a letter to his brother, John, dated 3 October 1823, in which he declared it his intention to 'resume [his] station' in the Examiner, illness having already forced him to abandon his contributions to the Literary Examiner (a supplement established in the wake of the Liberal).[185] He also proposed that his brother 'should publish and halve the

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181 There is, however, a note with the second 'Dithyrambick' indicating that this had already appeared in an (unidentified) English Newspaper, 'but very imperfectly', Florence Miscellany, 154-8, 159-62, 163-6.

182 Quoting ALH, III, 112-3, and Bacchus in Tuscany, vi. In the latter Hunt states only that the discovery was made 'some years ago'.

183 Bacchus in Tuscany, vi. Mathias' s edition had appeared in 1804.

184 ALH, III, 113.

185 See Brewer, 157-8, and ALH, III, 109. The Literary Examiner comprised 26 numbers and ran from 5 Jul. to 27 Dec. 1823.

profits of any book [he] might write', adding that this 'could only be something in the way of translation, or some such thing distinct from the trying demand of original composition'.[186] This proposal would be repeated in a subsequent letter, written 14 October (the day of the move to Maiano). Having '[got] out into the country air', Hunt felt that his 'health...promise[d] to be better'. He was, nevertheless, 'willing still to restrain his pen as much as possible'.[187] As the Preface to Bacchus in Tuscany reveals, this resolve would not hold long:

> In 1823, on a beautiful day in autumn, it was my fate, among my usual number of less pleasant vicissitudes, to find myself walking about Petraia and Castello, two sylvan spots in the neighbourhood of Florence, which Redi has immortalized. The same day, I drank, for the first time in my life, of
>
> Montepulciano, the King of all Wine,
>
> *and I found it impossible any longer to resist. The next morning I commenced my translation* [my italics].[188]

By 11 December, the work was 'rapidly proceeding', its 'spirit and vivacity' providing an antidote to the 'greater and graver thoughts' which had apparently deterred him from engaging with the usual companion of his daily walks, Boccaccio.[189] The

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186 Brewer, 158.

187 The first quote taken from the earlier letter, Ibid. 157, 159.

188 Bacchus in Tuscany, vi-vii.

189 Quoting the letter to his brother of that date, Gates, 146, and the Preface to Bacchus in Tuscany, v, vii. For Hunt, these undoubtedly included memories of Shelley with whom he had enjoyed the scenery around Florence ('in spite of distance') some three years earlier through the medium of Count Baldelli's Life of Boccaccio. See his letter to Shelley of 6 Apr. 1820 (and that dated 24 Apr. 1818, which contains a similar suggestion regarding a book on Venice) Correspondence, I, 117, 154-5, .

finished translation was forwarded for publication at the beginning of January 1824, at which point, presumably, Hunt wrote the Dedication in which he offered it to his brother as a 'new years present', in 'default' of 'a pipe of Tuscan Wine, or a hamper of Tuscan sunshine'.[190]

The translation of Redi's Bacco would appear to have given Hunt some of that 'elevation' which he hoped his brother would experience upon receiving it.[191] It was not long, however, before he began to have doubts as to its interest for a wider (English) audience. It seems that Hunt had asked Mary Shelley to find a buyer for the poem should his brother refuse to publish it himself.[192] Writing to Elizabeth Kent on 20 February 1824, he sought to relieve her of this 'very useless' and 'disagreeable task':

> Tell her [Mary Shelley]...that upon a due consideration of the nature of the poem...I would rather turn it into an article for a magazine, and that I would thank her accordingly to send me the Notes to it back again, as I have no copy of them. Extracts from the poem, with remarks, may furnish an article amusing enough.[193]

Mary Shelley had in fact advised Hunt to concentrate on his periodical work in a letter dated 9 February in which she reported that his brother had already offered the translation to Colburn and 'meant to offer it to others'.[194] She appears to have met John Hunt again some four months later at which time he 'talked of bringing out' the

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[190] The published Dedication was dated 1 Jan. 1825.

[191] Dedication, Bacchus in Tuscany.

[192] See Mary Shelley's letter to Vincent Novello dated [c. 19 Jan.-9 Feb. 1824 in The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, ed. Betty T. Bennett, 2 vols. (Baltimore and London, 1980), I, 410-11.

[193] See Brewer, 133.

[194] Letters, I, 412.

poem (though she had seen 'no proofs or advertisements' when she wrote to Hunt on 29 July).[195] As it turned out, the Bacchus in Tuscany was published (by John Hunt) the following year, accompanied by a Preface in which Hunt acknowledged the impossibility of 'convey[ing] a proper Italian sense' of the original to an English reader. He reflected, however, that 'good natured intelligence' would always be 'willing to find something to be pleased with'. The poem's 'novelty' was one such thing, another was its author's 'social genealogy'. In a passage which recalls his essay for the Indicator of 17 November 1819, Hunt noted that among Redi's friends were 'three of Milton's acquaintances, when he was in Italy'. Whilst the Italian was only twelve at the time of Milton's visit, 'he may have seen him, and surely heard of him', Hunt argued, tracing a series of 'links' which gave 'reason to believe' that both Redi and his poem were 'well known in England'.[196] Here was evidence of that 'universal sympathy' to which Hunt appealed in publishing his translation, a 'sympathy' illustrated in his closing declaration that 'A poet has wine in his blood. The laurel and ivy were common, of old, both to Bacchus and Apollo.'[197]

Hunt's fondness of imitating his divine predecessors was something which was remarked upon in the eighth of Blackwood's 'Cockney School essays' - a review of Bacchus in Tuscany, published in August 1825:

> What think you, gentle reader, of Leigh Hunt, who so long enacted the character of "Apollar in Cockaigne", undertaking that of "Bacchus in Tuscany?" Must he not be a perfect Jack of all trades? In good truth, Leigh Hunt is never in his proper element, unless he be a Heathen God.[198]

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[195] It was, she wrote, 'about a month' since she had seen his brother, Letters, I, 440.

[196] Preface, Bacchus in Tuscany, v, xiii-xv. That one of Redi's friends (Malatesta) had dedicated a volume to Milton was also noted by Hazlitt in his Notes of a Journey through France and Italy, Howe, X, 218.

[197] Preface, Bacchus in Tuscany, xv, xix.

[198] 'The Cockney School of Poetry. No. VIII', Blackwood's (Aug. 1825), 157.

The comments echoed those made in the earlier review of Ultra-Crepidarius in which satire Hunt's Mercury had attacked Gifford (previously ridiculed by him in the guise of Apollo).[199] Ascribing the satire first to Hunt's son and then to his grandfather, the Blackwood's critic revelled in terms reminiscent of those used by Gifford in his depiction of the 'full-grown children' of the 'Cruscan school' labouring under the effects of 'metromania'.[200] The metaphor of 'disease' was also taken up in the later review:

> Mr Hunt is well known to be an amiable man, in spite of his Cockneyisms; and, for a long series of Numbers, we did our best to cure him of that distemper. We purged him—we bled him—we blistered him—we bandaged him—but all would not do—we could not reach the seat of the disease. It was in his blood, his bone, and his brain;and to have cured it would have been absolutely to have killed him.[201]

Prior to his departure for Italy, it was noted, Hunt had 'lived on the poorest diet', providing the readers of the Examiner with 'a weekly bulletin of the state of his bowels' in much the same way as the 'defunct *Della Crusca*' were said (by Maginn) to have 'summoned the public to take in every thing belonging to their own triviality'.[202] The dedication to his Bacchus suggested that Hunt was now 'in the way of convalescence'. Nevertheless, the critic 'anticipated the most serious consequences' from 'the sudden and violent change of regimen' brought about by this encounter between the 'tea-inspired prince of Cockney bards' and 'Monte Pulciano, the king

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199 'There is nothing that Mr Hunt is so fond of as being a heathen god.', 'Ultra-Crepidarius, &c.', Blackwood's (Jan. 1824), 88.

200 See Ibid. 86-7, and Baviad and Mæviad, 10, 49.

201 'Cockney School. VIII', 155.

202 Quoting Ibid. 155, and Maginn's 'Remarks on Shelley's Adonais', 696.

all wine'.[203] Having apparently abandoned all hope of curing Hunt, and being in some doubt as to his suitability for the role of Bacchus, the critic turned instead to encouraging him in the perfection of his 'Baccahanal'.[204]

In her letter of 9 February 1824, Mary Shelley had informed Hunt that Ultra Crepidarius was not selling (Gifford being 'out of fashion').[205] His Bacchus in Tuscany was to suffer a similar fate, a circumstance which Hunt attributed as much to 'poor printing' and a 'lack of advertising' as to the difficulties acknowledged in the Preface.[206] His attempt to 'transplant...Redi's Italian vines into England' having failed, Hunt considered importing 'some literature of modern English growth' into Italy in the shape of 'a quarterly compilation from the English magazines'. However (rather like the authors of the Florence Miscellany before him), Hunt faced obstacles put in place by the Tuscan censors and the project had to be abandoned.[207] A contributing factor in Hunt's plan had been the rarity of English periodicals in Italy. This was evidently something which he felt keenly, one of his notes to Bacchus in Tuscany referring to the many book advertisements with which he was 'tantalized' indicates.[208] In the months following the completion of the translation, Hunt had become 'more reconciled to the beauties of Tuscany'. Writing to Elizabeth Kent on 2 June 1824, he noted that he just 'taken possession' of the room with *the* window', furnish[ing it] with a bit of [his] old home' in the shape of his books, and prints, including one of 'Mr. Havell's drawing of Angelica and Medoro' (a subject redolent with memories of the parlour at Newman Street in which house he had first learned to

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203 'Cockney School. VIII', 155-6. Hunt referred to as the 'tea-inspired prince of Cockney bards' in 'The Candid. No. I', Blackwood's (Jan. 1823), 122.

204 'Cockney School. VIII', 157-160.

205 Letters, I, 412

206 See ALH, III, 116-7.

207 Ibid. III, 122-3.

208 The note is echoed in his letter to Elizabeth Kent of 26 Feb. 1825. Bacchus in Tuscany, 166, Correspondence, I, 236-7.

love Italy).[209] Nevertheless, as he admitted in another of his notes he would have gladly 'quit it all for a walk over the fields from Hampstead, to one or two houses [he] could mention'.[210] By April 1825 the Hunts were 'determined' to return to England. There, they would have their 'old companionship of books', thereby possessing 'Italy and England together'.[211] Saving 'a finer sky and a drier atmosphere', Hunt reflected, 'we have the best part of Italy in books; and this we can enjoy' at home:

> Give me Tuscany in Middlesex or Berkshire, and the Valley of Ladies, between Harrow and Jack Straw's Castle. The proud names and flinty ruins above the Mensola may keep their distance. Boccaccio shall build a bower for us out of his books, of all that we choose to import; and we shall have daisies and fresh meadows besides.[212]

Having taken leave of Brown and Kirkup at Maiano at the beginning of September, the Hunts travelled through Italy and into France, sailing for London on 12 October 1825.

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[209] Correspondence, I, 220-2. For the Havell family of artists and printmakers see DNB 25 (2004), 846-9.

[210] Bacchus in Tuscany, 174-5.

[211] Quoting Hunt's letter to Elizabeth Kent of 16 Apr. 1824, Correspondence. I, 237-8 and the remark concerning Florence in ALH, III, 99.

[212] As Hunt reflectted further on in his Autobiography, even his Italian books were more associated with England than they were with Italy itself, ALH, III, 120-1, 184.

CONCLUSION

Upon returning to England in the autumn of 1825, Leigh Hunt wasted no time in taking possession of his 'old English scenery', resuming his walks among his 'favourite haunts' with 'a delight proportionate to the difference of their beauty from that of...Italy'. Recalling his feelings at this time in his Autobiography (1850), Hunt insisted that 'the jests about Londoners and Cockneys did not affect [him] in the least'; his critics 'might as well have said that Hampstead was not beautiful, or Richmond lovely; or that Chaucer and Milton were Cockneys when they went out of London to lie on the grass and look at the daisies'. The 'Cockney school of poetry', he declared, 'is the most illustrious in England;

> for, to say nothing of Pope and Gray, who were both veritable Cockneys, "born within the sound of Bow Bell", Milton was so too; and Chaucer and Spenser were both natives of the city. Of the four greatest English poets, Shakespeare only was not a Londoner.[1]

Here, Hunt reclaimed the 'Cockney school' from its critics, re-asserting those 'positive presentations' which they had endeavoured to obscure, and establishing its place in that 'series of connecting shakes' which lead up to the 'greatest English poets'.[2] Many of the great poets had looked to Italy, and it was in following their lead that Hunt, in particular, incurred the critics' wrath. Blackwood's definition of the 'Cockney School' was founded on the image of the 'Anglo-Italian' Hunt; their essays upon it began in response to his Story of Rimini, during the composition of which the 'school' may be said to have formed. As this thesis has shown, in order to understand the reaction to the 'Cockney School', it is necessary to be aware of the earlier conflict between

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[1] ALH, III, 180, 186-7.

[2] Quoting Cox, Poetry and Politics in the Cockney School, 21, and Hunt's 'Social Genealogy', 227.

William Gifford and the so-called 'Della Cruscans'. As has been demonstrated throughout the thesis, the criticism of this 'school', clearly anticipated that of the 'Cockneys' in respect of both terminology and motivation. The characterisation of 'Della Crusca' (Robert Merry) provided a model for that of Hunt, and, subsequently, Shelley and Byron; that of the paper (World) in which his poetic correspondences were conducted for both the Examiner and the Liberal. As Steven Jones has pointed out, whilst they objected to the severity of Giffords' attack, Hunt and his associates were 'at pains to distance' themselves from the 'Della Cruscans', a process which was continued by subsequent commentators.[3] However, as was seen in Chapter I, there was another group within this 'school', distinct from that satirised by Gifford, a group whose work (both individually and collectively) anticipated the Italianate projects of Hunt and his associates. It has been the aim of this thesis to re-establish their place within Hunt's 'social genealogy'.

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[3] See Satire and Romanticism, 132-6.

APPENDIX

THE 'PAULO AND FRANCESCA' EPISODE IN BRITISH ART AND LITERATURE TO 1900 (INCLUDING TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH BY NON-BRITISH WRITERS AND TRANSLATIONS OF THE INFERNO AND DIVINA COMMEDIA IN THEIR ENTIRETY)

[1385-6]	Geoffrey Chaucer	Inf. v. 100 (translated/adapted). In: 'Prologue' to Legend of Good Women.
[1386-8]	Geoffrey Chaucer	Inf. v. 100 (translated/adapted). In: Knight's Tale, Man of Law's Tale, Merchant's Tale and Squire's Tale.
1584	Robert Greene	Reference to the 'Ladie Francis Rimhi'. In: The Debate betweene Follie and Love (from the French of Louise Labé, 1555).
1588	Thomas Hughes	Inf. v. 121-3 (translated: blank verse). In: The Misfortunes of Arthur.
1598	John Keper	Inf. v. 103 (translated: prose and unrhymed verse). In: The Courtiers Academie, translated from the Discorsi Cavallereschi of Annibale Romei.
1760-1	William Huggins	Translation (heroic couplets). Divina Commedia. Unpublished.

1761	Charles Burney	Translation (prose). Inferno. Unpublished.
1774-81	Thomas Warton	'General view' of the Commedia, including the 'Paulo and Francisca' episode and quoting Inf. v. 127-38 in the Italian. In: The History of English Poetry.
1777	Henry Fuseli	Drawing (monochrome). 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 74-5). One of six subjects from the Commedia, executed at Rome.
1778	Anon.	Oil painting. 'Francesca and Paolo: a story from the Inferno of Dante'. Society of Artists, No. 156.
1782	William Hayley	Reference to 'Paulo and Francesca' episode. In: Essay on Epic Poetry.
	Charles Rogers	Translation (blank verse). Inferno. Published anonymously.
1785	William Parsons	Translation (heroic couplets). 'The Story of Francesca from the Fifth Canto of Dante's Inferno; A free Translation'.

		In: The Florence Miscellany. Privately printed.
	Henry Boyd	Translation (six-lined stanzas). Inferno. 'Paulo and Francesca' episode given as a specimen in the Monthly Review (Dec.).
1786	Henry Fuseli	Oil painting. 'Francesca and Paolo, Dante's Inferno, Canto 5.'. R. A. No. 53.
1787	William Parsons	[As 1785] In: A Poetical Tour in the Years 1784, 1785, and 1786.
1793	J. Flaxman	'Compositions' (outline). Scenes from the Divina Commedia (111 compositions, published at Rome).
1794	Henry Constantine Jennings	Translation (blank verse). 'The little Novel of Francesca' (Inferno. v. 1-138, condensed by 35 lines), accompanied by the narrative of Ugolino. Privately printed.
1798	Henry Constantine Jennings	[As 1794] In: Summary and Free Reflections.

	Anon./Henry Boyd	Translation (extracted from Boyd). 'Paul and Frances. From Dante' (Inf. v. 121-41). In: Extracts from the works of the most celebrated Italian poets, with translations by admired English authors.
	Thomas James Mathias	Cites Inf. v. 112-4 and 130-3. In: The Pursuits of Literature and Translations of the Passages quoted in the Pursuits of Literature (prose).
1802	Henry Boyd	Translation (six-lined stanzas). Divina Commedia.
1803	John Raphael Smith	Oil painting (engraved in Mezzotint by William Ward). 'Paulo and Francosia' (with motto from stanza 24 of Boyd's translation). R. A. No. 559.
1805	Henry Francis Cary	Translation (blank verse), with the Italian text. Inferno i-xvii. Commenced 16 June 1797 (second part published, 1806).
1807	J. Flaxman	[As 1793] Published in England, with quotations from the Italian text and translations by Boyd.

	William Parsons	[As 1785] In: Travelling Recreations.
	Anon.	Reference to the 'terrific episode...of... Françoise D'Arimini' and others. In: Historic Gallery of Portraits and Paintings; or Biographical Review: Containing a brief account of the lives of the most celebrated men, in every age and country.
	Nathaniel Howard	Translation (blank verse). Inferno.
1809	Archer James Oliver	Oil painting. 'Paulo and Francesca'. R. A. No. 155.
1810	Archer James Oliver	Oil painting. 'Paulo and Francesca'. B. I. No. 61.
1812	Joseph Hume	Translation (blank verse). Inferno.
1814	John Colin Dunlop	Reference to the 'Galeotto' read by Paulo and Francesca, citing Inf. v. 137. In: The History of Fiction.

	Lord Byron	Inf. v. 105, 120, 121-3 used as mottoes. In: The Corsair.
	Henry Francis Cary	Translation. Divina Commedia.
[1815]	Henry Fuseli	Sketch (with brief summary). 'Dante overcome by pity and terror at the tale of Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 142).
	William Hazlitt	Reference to the 'story of Genevra [for 'Francesca'], citing Inf. v. 138 (translated). In: 'Essay on Sismondi's Literature of the South', Edinburgh Review (June).
1816	Leigh Hunt	'The Story of Rimini. Commenced 1811.
[1816]	Thomas Stothard	[Painting Leigh states in a letter to Charles Cowden Clarke, that Stothard recently told an acquaintance of his that he had been painting a subject from the Story of Rimini.]
1817	Mary Anne Ansley	Oil painting. 'Francesca' (suggested by The Story of Rimini). B. I. No. 81.

1818 Henry Fuseli

[As 1815 ?]

'Dante in his descent to Hell, discovers amidst flights of hapless lovers whirled about in a hurricane, the forms of Paolo and Francesca of Rimini: obtains Virgil's permission to address them; and being informed of the dreadful blow that sent them to that abode of torment at once, overcome by pity and terror, drops like a lifeless corpse on the rock.

'E caddi, come corpo morto cace'.

R. A. No. 16.

S. T. Coleridge

Reference to 'the passages on Francesca di Rimini...and on Ugolino'.

In: Lecture on Dante (27 Feb.).

Henry Hallam

The story of Francesca cited as an example of Dante's 'extraordinary command of language'.

In: View of the State of Europe During the Middle Ages.

Anon.

Summary of Inferno - refers to the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode, recommending Hunt's Story of Rimini to those who wish to know more of 'this affecting story'

In: Monthly Magazine.

Ugo Foscolo

'The Tale of Francesca da Rimini' described as Dante's 'masterpiece'.

		In: 'Biagioli's Edition of the Divina Commedia - Cary's Vision of Dante', Edinburgh Review (Feb.)
1819	John Keats	'A Dream, after reading Dante's episode of Paulo and Francesca' (sonnet). In: Letter to George Keats (18 April 1819).
	Henry Francis Cary	[As 1814].
1820	Lord Byron	Translation (terza rima). 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 97-142). In: Letter to John Murray, 20 March (published, 1830).
	John Keats	[As 1819] In: Indicator (28 June).
	Henry Fuseli	Reference to the 'Paolo and Francesca of Dante'. In: Fourth lecture on painting, delivered at the Royal Academy.
1821	'Y'.	Translation (terza rima). Inf. v. In: Edinburgh Magazine (May) dated Dec. 1820.
	Lady Morgan [Sydney Owenson]	Reference to Dante's 'Francesca' during an account of Rimini. In: Italy.

	P. B. Shelley	Reference to 'Francesca' episode. In: On the Devil, and Devils.
1822	John Taafe	An account of the 'real history' of Paulo and Francesca (including Inf. v. 98-9). In: A Comment on the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri. Recommended by Hunt in 'Letters from Abroad. Letter No. I—Pisa', Liberal, I, No. I, (Oct.).
	Anon.	Inf. v. 121-3, 139-42 (translated: blank verse). In: 'The Confessional. No. 1. Love', New Monthly Magazine.
[	Kenelm Henry Digby	Reference to 'Paulo and Francesca episode In: The Broadstone of Honour] Published anonymously (for revised edition see 1826-7).
1823	Anon.	'The brief compressiveness of the few words of Francesca da Rimini' cited. In: 'Of Dante and his Times', Blackwood's Magazine (Feb.).
	William Coxe	Inf. v. 133 misquoted. In: Sketches of the Lives of Correggio, and Parmegiano. Published anonymously.

1824	William Blake	Designs (coloured/partly coloured). 98 Scenes from the Divina Commedia, including 68 were from the Inferno - 7 of these were engraved with titles from Cary's translation, in 1827.
	Thomas Babington Macaulay	Reference to the 'ill-starred love of Francesca'. In: 'Criticisms on the Principal Italian Writers, I', Knight's Quarterly Magazine.
	Thomas Medwin	Reference to Francesca having lived at Ravenna. In: Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron: Noted during a residence with his Lordship at Pisa, in the years 1821 and 1822.
1825	Thomas Roscoe	Inf. v. 137 quoted in connection with an alternative title (Il Principe Galeotto) sometimes applied to the Decameron. In: The Italian Novelists.
	Edgar Taylor	Puts forward (mistaken) theory that Paulo and Francesca read the Romance of Lancelot in the Provençal, citing Inf. v. 127-9. In: Lays of the Minnesingers or German Troubadours of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.
	Lorenzo da Ponte	Inf. v. 76-8 (translated: blank verse). In: 'Critique on Certain Passages in Dante',

		New York Review and Athenaeum Magazine.
1826	John Browning	Reference to the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode. In: The History of Tuscany; from the Italian of Lorenzo Pignotti (Original dated: 1813-16).
	Anon.	Dante's comparison of 'Francesca D'Arimino and her lover' to doves cited as an example of that bird's association with 'ardour, fidelity, and impatient desire of love', citing Inf. v. 82. In: 'Wiffen's Tasso', Westminster Review (Oct.).
1826-7	Kenelm Henry Digby	[As 1822, revised and enlarged]. Reference to Dante's song of 'Francesca and the the son of Rimini's proud lord', citing Inf. v. 141-2 (Cary's translation). In: The Broad Stone of Honour: or The True Sense and Practice or Chivalry.
1827	Henry Perronet Briggs	Oil painting. 'Francesca and Paulo' (Inf. v. 100-2).
	J. Redaway	Engraving (of Brigg's painting). Frontispiece for Pietro Cicchetti's edition of the Divina Commedia (in Italian).
1828	Thomas Babington Macaulay	Considers the response of Dante's contemporaries to such episodes as that of 'Paulo and Francesca'.

		In: 'Essay on John Dryden', Edinburgh Review (Jan.).
1830	Lord Byron	[Translation, as 1820].
	Samuel Rogers	Allusion to Paulo and Francesca. In: 'Ginevra', Italy. A Poem.
1831	Anton Panizzi	Points to Rimini's association with 'the tragical deaths of Francesca da Polenta and Paolo Malatesta...the subject of one of the finest episodes in Dante's poem...'. In: 'The Tourist in Italy', The Landscape Annual.
	Henry Francis Cary	[As 1814].
1832	John Rogers Herbert	Oil painting. 'Francesca'. Society of British Artists, No. 266.
	Anon.	Inf. v. 97-142 extracted. In: Notizie intorno all'Origine e alla Storia della Lingua e della Letteratura Italiana (London).
	Leigh Hunt	The 'Paulo and Francesca' episode likened to 'a lily [standing] in the mouth of Tartarus'. In: Argument to a new edition of The Story of Rimini.

1833	Ichabod Charles Wright	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
1835	Marie Françoise Catherine Doetter Corbaux	Oil painting. 'From Canto V of the Inferno' (Inf. v. 121-3). Society of British Artists, No. 86.
1836	Anon.	Translation ('in stanzas of three blank lines'). Inf. v. In: The Inquisitor. Letters addressed to Trelawney Tompkinson, Esq.
	Walter Savage Landor	References to the 'Paolo and Francesca' epsiode. In: The Pentameron; or Interviews of Messer Giovanni Boccaccio and Messer Francesco Petrarca.
	Edward N. Shannnon [as 'Odoardo Volpi']	Translation (terza rima). Inferno i-x.
1837	Charles West Cope	Oil painting. 'Paulo and Francisca' (with motto from Cary's translation: Inf. v. 127 ff.) R. A. No. 39.
	William Dyce	Oil painting. 'Francesca da Rimini'. R. S. A. No. 49.

1837-9	Henry Hallam	Refers to 'the Story of Francesca da Rimini' and her reading of 'the tale of Lancelot', questioning whether or not Milton would have been capable of writing such a passage. In: Introduction to the Literature of Europe, in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries.
1838	Richard Westmacott	Alto-relievo in marble. 'Paolo and Francesca' (with motto in Italian: Inf. v. 74-5, 134-5). R. A. No. 1276. Praised in the Quarterly Review (see below).
	John Herman Merivale	Translation (terza rima). 'Paul and Francesca' (Inf. v. 25-141). In: Poems Original and Translated. Episode- preceded by praise of Westmacott's sculpture - given as a specimen in the Quarterly Review (Oct.).
	Alfred D. Lemmon	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca: 'That day we read no more' (from Cary's translation). B. I. No. 368.
	Thomas Carlyle	Discussion of the 'celebrated passage about Francesca', citing her response to Dante. In: Fifth Lecture on the History of Literature.

1840	Thomas Carlyle	Discussion of Dante's 'painting' of the tragedy of 'Francesca and her Lover', citing Inf. v. 88-92, 100, 103, 107, 127-9, 133-6, 138. In: Lectures on Heroes - The Hero as Poet.
	Walter Savage Landor	Reference to what one of his characters says 'on reading Dante's story of Francesca da Rimini' (in Fra Rupert, published in 1841). In: Letter to John Forster
	P. Hawe	Translation (prose). Inf. i-xvii. Unprinted.
	John Abraham Heraud	Translation (terza rima). Inferno. Unpublished.
1841	Thomas Carlyle	[As 1840 - published].
	Anon.	Dante's 'Francesca da Rimini' said to be unequalled 'in any work, ancient or modern'. In: 'Bruce Whyte's Histoire des Langues Romanes', Foreign Quarterly Review (Oct.).
1842	Henry Nelson O'Neil	Oil painting. 'Paul and Francesca of Rimini' (with motto from Inf. v. 127, 132-8, translated by the artist). R. A. No. 258.

	W. S. P. Henderson	Oil painting. 'The sunny days of old' (with motto adapted from Cary's translation, Inf. v. 127 ff.). R. A. No. 523.
	S. Kirkup	Drawings (49). Subjects from Dante (engraved as illustrations for the third volume of theVernon Dante, published in 1865).
	Alfred Tennyson	Reminiscence of Inf. v. 121-3. In: Locksley Hall.
1843	Anon.	Consideration of Dante's treatment of the story of 'Paolo and Francesca' ('he describes the reading, the tremours, the doom...Ariosto would have described their endearments'). In: 'Dayman's Dante', Spectator (19 Aug.).
	Octavian Blewitt	Reference to Francesca's 'tale of guilty love' occasioned by the identification of the site of her residence at Rimini. In: Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy.
	John Dayman	Translation (terza rima). The Inferno.
	Thomas William Parsons	Translation (rhymed quatrains). Inferno. i-x.

1844	Lord John Russell	Translation (heroic couplets). 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 73-142). In: Literary Souvenir.
	John Herman Merivale	[As 1838, revised].
	Francesco Frank	Translation (prose). Inf. v. Printed at Ferrara.
	Anon.	Dante's 'story of Francesca' described as one of the portions of a 'vast picture', often selected for 'admiring study, on account of their transcendent beauty'. In: 'Lord John Russell's Translation of the "Francesca da Rimini", from the "Inferno" of Dante', English Review (April).
	Henry Francis Cary	[As 1814].
1845	Ichabod Charles Wright	Translation. Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso. Previously published separately.
1845-7	George Frederick Watts	Oil painting (different design from that of 1879). 'Paolo and Francesca'. B. I. No. 82 (1848).

1845-6	Thomas Wade	Translation (terza rima). Inferno. Unpublished.
1846	Leigh Hunt	Translations (prose and terza rima). 'Story of Paulo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 70-142). With historical details. In: Stories from the Italian Poets.
1847	Thomas Medwin	Reference to the 'Paulo and Francesca' episode (Byron's opinion - and translation - of it). In: Life of Shelley.
1848	John Harwood	Oil painting. 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 127). B. I. No. 349.
	George Frederick Watts	[As 1845-7] B. I. No. 82 (1848).
1849	R. F. Abraham	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francisca; from Dante'. B. I. No. 275.
	John Aitken Carlyle	Translation (prose). Inferno.
[1850]	Frederic Leighton	Silver-point. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 133-6).

	Spencer Hall	Translation (blank verse). 'Francesca da Rimini. An Episode' (Inf. v. 97 ff). Privately printed.
1850	'J. P.'	Translation (blank verse). 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 73-142). In: Tait's Edinburgh Magazine (May).
	Patrick Bannerman	Translation (heroic verse). Divina Commedia.
1851	Joseph Noel Paton	Oil painting. 'Death of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini'. R. S. A. No. 171.
	Leonard Francis Simpson	Translation (terza rima). 'Francesca' episode (Inf. v. 97-107, 116-42). In: The Literature of Italy.
	Charles Bagot Cayley	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
1852	Joseph Noel Paton	Oil painting. 'Dante meditating the episode of Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta'. R. S. A. No. 83.
	Alexander Munro	Marble group. 'Paolo e Francesca' (with translation, in terza

		rima of Inf. v. 127-38).
		R. A. No. 1340.
	E. O'Donnell	Translation (prose).
		Divina Commedia.
1853	William Gilmore	Translation (terza rima).
	Simms	'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 73-142).
		In: Poems, Descriptive, Dramatic, Legendary,
		and Contemplative.
1854	Dante Gabriel	Pencil Drawing.
	Rossetti	'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 127-38).
	Henry Stormonth	Marble group.
	Liefchild	'Paolo e Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 106).
		R. A. No. 1391.
	Charles Ichabod Wright	[As 1833].
	Thomas Brooksbank	Translation (terza rima).
		Inferno.
	William Frederick	Translation (blank verse).
	Pollock	Divina Commedia.
1855	Dante Gabriel	Triptych (water colour).
	Rossetti	'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 74-5, 112-4,
		127-36).
		One of several water-colours of scenes from

		the Divina Commedia.
	T. M. Bouchier Marshall	Oil painting. 'Francesca'. R. A. No. 99.
1856	William Gale	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 44). B. I. No. 406.
1857	Henry Weigall jun.	Oil painting. From Inf. v. 121-3. B. I. No. 443.
	J. C. Peabody	Translation (blank verse). Inferno. i-x.
1859	John Wesley Thomas	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
	Bruce Whyte	Free Translation (verse). Inferno.
1860	Henry Stormonth Liefchild	Marble group. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 106). R. A. No. 952.

	John Payne	Translation (verse). Divina Commedia. Unpublished.
1861	Frederic Leighton	Oil painting. 'Paolo e Francesca' (Inf. v. 132-8). R. A. No. 276.
	Dante Gabriel Rossetti	Water colour. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 127-36).
1862	Dante Gabriel Rossetti	Water colour (replica of 1855 triptych). With translation (terza rima) of Inf. v. 112-42, dated Sept. 1862.
	William P. Wilkie	Translation (irregular verse). Inferno.
	Mrs C. H. Ramsay	Translation (terza rima). Inferno (and Purgatorio - Paradiso appeared in 1863).
	Hugh Bent	Translation (terza rima). Inferno. Privately printed.
1865	William Michael Rossetti	Translation (blank verse). Inferno.

	James Ford	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Translation (blank verse). Inferno. Privately printed.
	Thomas William Parsons	Translation (rhymed quatrains) 17 Cantos of Inferno.
	John Dayman	Translation (terza rima). Divina Commedia.
1866	Mary Bayard Clark	Translation . 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 115-38).
	William P. Wilkie	[As 1862, revised].
1867	David Johnston	Translation (blank verse). Inferno (and Purgatorio).
	Thomas William Parsons	Translation (rhymed quatrains). Inferno.
	John Aitken Carlyle	[As 1849, revised].
	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	Translation (blank verse). Divina Commedia.

1868	John George Harding	Translation (blank verse). Inf. v. 116-42. In: Flosculi Literarum; or, Gems from the Poetry of all Time.
1870	[S. Kirkup]	'Painting' (actual date/details unknown). Inf. v. 135. Kirkup states that he 'chose [this] for a subject and painted it' in a letter to Swinburne of 4 Sept. 1870, printed in the London Mercury (Dec. 1920).
	James Ford	Translation (terza rima). Divina Commedia.
1871	T. A. Trollope	'The True Story of Francesca da Rimini'. In: St Paul's Magazine (Jan.).
	Ernest Ridsdale Ellaby	Translation (verse). Inferno i-x.
1874	Ernest Ridsdale Ellaby	[As 1871, revised].
[1875]	William Charteris	Translation (irregular verse). Divina Commedia. Unpublished.
1875	Edmund Doidge Anderson Moreshead	Translation (Spenserian stanzas). 'Francesca' (Inf. v. 70-142).

		In: Dante - an essay read before the New College Essay Society, Nov. 20. Privately printed.
1876	Frederic Leighton	Oil painting. 'Paulo'. R. A. No. 970.
1877	Margaret Oliphant	Translation (terza rima). Inf. v. 73-142. In: Dante for English Readers.
	Charles Tomlinson	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
1879	George Frederick Watts	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca'. Grosvenor Gallery Summer Exhibition, No. 73.
	R. Buckner	Oil painting. 'Francesca'. Grosvenor Gallery Summer Exhibition, No. 198.
	J. S. Westmacott	Basso relievo (bronzed plaster). 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 139-40). R. A. No. 1468.

	William Thomas Thornton	Translation (terza rima). 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v . 70-138). In: Spectator (7 June).
	Warburton Pike	Translation (terza rima). Inf. v. 1-142. In: Translations from Dante, Petrarch, Michael Angelo, and Vittoria Colonna. Published anonymously.
1881	Guido Bach	Oil painting. 'Francesca'. Grosvenor Gallery Winter Exhibition, No. 157.
	George Frederick Watts	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 76-87). Grosvenor Gallery Winter Exhibition, No. 55.
	Warburton Pike	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
1883	E. H. Plumptre	Translation (terza rima). Inferno v. 73-142. In: Samples of a New Translation of the Divina Commedia
1884	J. Ady	'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v). In: Magazine of Art.

	Anon.	Translation (terza rima). Inferno. v. In: Oxford Magazine (7 May).
	James Romanes Sibbald	Translation (terza rima). Inferno.
1885	Charles W. Pittard	Oil painting. 'Francesca'. R. A. No. 42.
	John Watts de Peyster	Translation (blank verse). 'Francesca da Rimini' (Inf. v. 73-123). Privately printed.
	James Innes Minchin	Translation (terza rima). Divina Commedia. Originally completed in 1857.
1886	Sir Coutts Lindsay	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca' (Inf. v. 127-36). Grosvenor Gallery. Summer Exhibition, No. 44.
	Frederick Kill Harford	Translation (blank verse). Inf. v. Printed as a specimen of an unpublished Inferno.

	Edward Hayes Plumptre	Translation (terza rima). Inferno (and Purgatorio).
	Arabella Shore	Dante for Beginners. A Sketch of the Divina Commedia. With Translations, Biographical and Critical Notices, and Illustrations.
1887	Frederick Kneller Haselfoot Haselfoot	Translation (terza rima). Divina Commedia.
1888	John Augustine Wilstach	Translation (nine-lined stanzas). Divina Commedia.
1889	Phoebe Anna Traquair	Outline Drawings (22). Scenes from the Divina Commedia (the drawings were reproduced in Dante Illustrations and Notes, printed privately at Edinburgh in 1890.
1891-2	Charles Eliot Norton	Translation (prose). Divina Commedia.
[1892]	Simeon Solomon	Crayon. From: 'Nessun maggior dolore' (Inf. v. 121). One of a number of pieces (various media) on subjects from Dante.

	Simeon Solomon	Crayon. 'Paolo e Francesca da Rimini'.
	Arthur John Butler	Translation (prose). Inferno.
1893	W. H. Mallock	'A New Francesca'. In: Verses.
	Sir Edward Sullivan	Translation (prose). Inferno.
	George Musgrave	Translation (Spenserian stanzas). Inferno.
	Thomas William Parsons	[As 1843].
1894	K. McC. Clark	'Paolo and Francesca'. In: Persephone, and Other Poems.
	Charles Tomlinson	Inf. v. 102 (translated: blank verse). In: Dante, Beatrice, and the Divine Comedy.
	William Warren Vernon	Translation (prose). Inferno. In: Readings on the Inferno of Dante.

1895	F. B. Dicksee	Crayon Study. 'Francesca'.
	F. B. Dicksee	Oil painting. 'Paolo and Francesca'. R. A. No. 171.
	R. Urquhart	Translation (terza rima). Inferno. Privately printed.
1896	Caroline C. Potter	Translation (rhymed quatrains). Inf. v. In: Canto's from the Divina Commedia of Dante.
	Maurice Henry Hewlett	Inf. v. 121-3 (translated: rhymed quatrain). In: Songs and Meditations.
	George Musgrave	[As 1896].
1897	John D. Batten	44 Brush drawings (black and white) Scenes from the Inferno (engraved on wood by Richard Taylor & Co. in preparation for a new edition of Musgrave's 1893 translation of the Inferno, exhibited at Leighton House in May 1900).

	Caroline C. Potter	[As 1896] In: Twenty-five Cantos from the Divina Commedia of Dante.
1898	Sir Samuel Walker	Translation (terza rima). 'The Story of Francesca' (Inf. v. 31-3, 73-142) In: Two Stories from Dante, literally Translated in the Original Metre (the other being 'The Story of Ugolino'.
	Eugene Lee-Hamilton	Translation (hendescasyllabic blank verse). Inferno.
1899	J. Byam Shaw	Oil Painting. 'Love the Conqueror' (Paolo and Francesca, one of the details). R. A. No. 906.
	F. Derwent Wood	Bronze group. Dante at Ravenna (Paolo and Francesca, one of the details). R. A. No. 1942.
	Epiphanius Wilson	Inf. v. 100-42 (translated: Spenserian stanzas). In: Dante Interpreted.
	Frederick Kneller Haselfoot Haselfoot	[As 1887, revised]

1900	Stephen Phillips	Drama.
		Paulo and Francesca; a Tragedy in Four Acts.

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HLO 2216, To Charles Cowden Clarke [Hampstead, 1816].